

THE
SAINTS
DAILY
EXERCISE,

A Treatise,
Unfolding the whole Dutie
of PRAYER.

Delivered in five SERMONS,
upon 1 THESS. 5. 17.

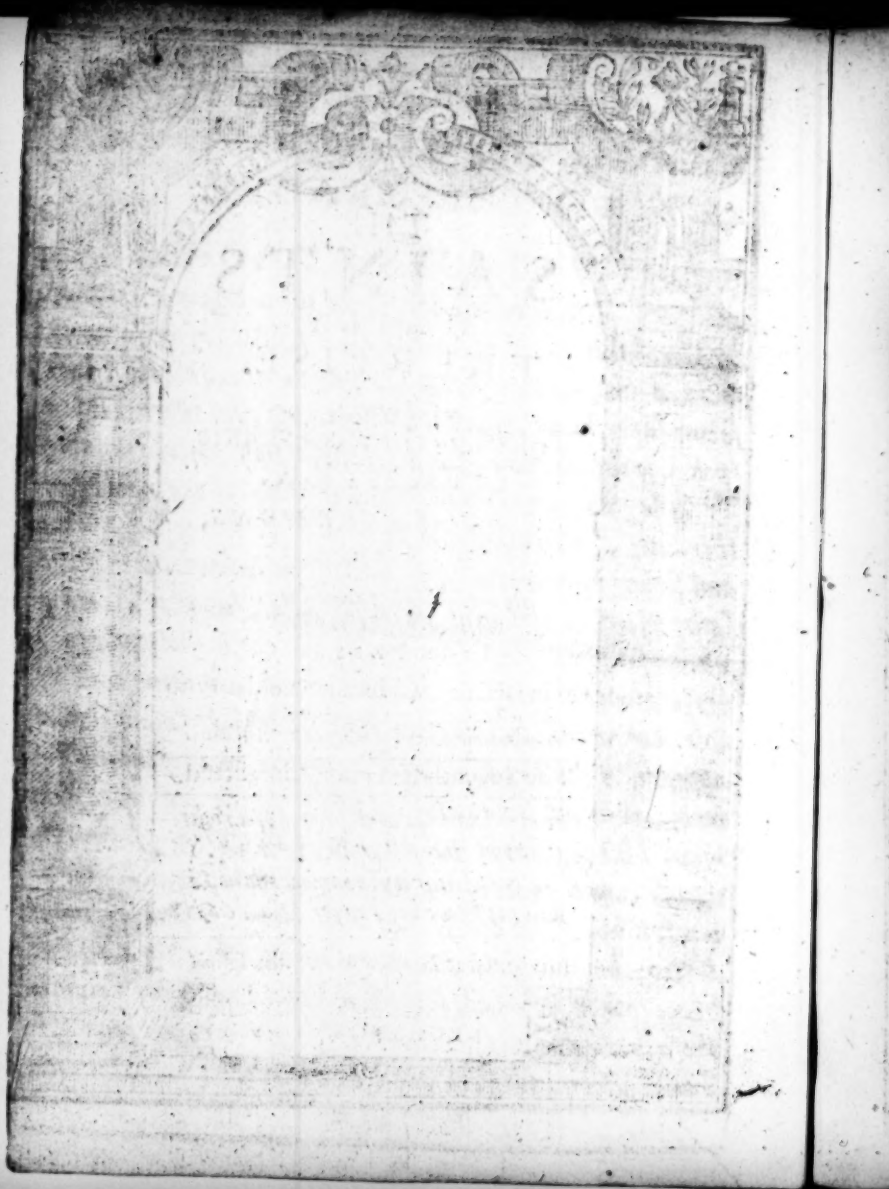
By the late faithfull and worthy
Minister of Iesus Christ,
JOHN PRESTON,

Dr. in Divinity, Chaplaine in ordinary to
his Majesty, Master of Emanuel Colledge in Cam-
bridge, & sometimes Preacher of Lincolns Inne.

The Seventh EDITION, Corrected.

*The effectuall fervent prayer of a righte-
ous man availeth much, James 5. 16.*
If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord
will not heare my Prayer, Psal. 66. 18.

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TO THE READER.



OURTEOVS READER,

To discourse largely of the necessity and use of this peece of spirituall armour, after so many learned and usefull Treatises, upon this subject, may seeme superfluous, especially considering that there is much spoken to this purpose, for thy satisfaction, in the ensuing Treatise; wherein, besides the unfolding of the nature of this dutie, (which is the SAINTS daily Exercise) and strong inforcement to it, there is an endeavour to give satisfaction in the most incident cases, want of clearing whereof is usually an hindrance to the chearefull, and ready performance thereof. In all which, what hath beene done by this Reverend and worthy man, wee had rather should appeare in the Treatise it selfe, to thy indifferent iudgement, then to bee much in setting downe our owne opinion. This we doubt not of, that, by reason of the spirituall, and convincing manner of handling this Argument, it will winne acceptance with many, especially considering, that it is of that nature, wherein, though much hath beene spoken, yet much more may be said with good relish to those that have any spirituall sense: for it is the most spirituall action, wherein wee have nearer communion with

To the Reader.

God, than in any other holy performance, and whereby it pleaseth God to conueigh all good to us, to the performance whereof Christians finde most backwardnesse, and indisposednesse, and from thence most deiection of spirit; which also in these times, is most necessarie; wherein, unlesse we fetch helpe from heauen, this way, wee see the Church, and Cause of God like to be trampled under feete. Onelie remember, that we let these Sermons passe forth as they were delivered by himselfe, in publicke, without taking that libertie of adding or detracting, which, perhaps, some would haue thought meete: for wee thought it best that his owne meaning should be expressed in his owne words and manner, especially considering there is little which perhaps may seeme superfluous to some, but may, by Gods blessing, bee usefull to others. It would be a good prevention of many inconveniencies, in this kinde, if able men would bee perswaded to publish their owne works in their life time, yet wee thinke it a good service to the Church, when that defect is supplied by giving some life to those things, which otherwise would haue died of themselves. The blessing of these labours of his we commend unto God, and the benefit of them unto thee, resting.

Thine in our Lord Iesus Christ,

RICHARD SIBBS.

JOHN DAVENPORT.



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THE
SAINTS
DAILY
EXERCISE.

THE FIRST SERMON.

1 THESS. 5. 17.

Pray continually.



THE Apostle here, in the latter end of this Epistle, heapes up many precepts together; & therefore we shal not need to seeke out the dependance of these words from those that goe before, or those that follow after. *Rejoyce evermore; (saith he) Pray continually; In all things give thanks: for this*

this is the will of God in Christ Iesus to you-wards.

We are now fallen upon this Text, where this duty of prayer is commended to us, and it is a command from God himselfe delivered shortly, as lawes are wont to bee, without any great promises and reasons, and indeede, hath therefore the more authority in it.

Pray continually.

IN the handling of which, wee will doe these three things:

First, we will shew you what *Prayer* is.

Secondly, why the *Lord* requires this at our hands; for a man might object, the *Lord* knows my wants well enough, hee knowes my minde, and how I am affected? I, but yet the *Lord* will have us to *pray*, and to aske before he will bestow it upon us.

And lastly, what it is to *pray continually*.

For the first: if we would define *prayer* in generall to you, I would give you no more but this description of it; *It is an expression of the mind to the Lord*: sometimes by words, sometimes without words, but yet there must bee an expression, and some opening of the will to him. This is the generall.

But now to know what a right *prayer* is, what such a *prayer* is, as God accepts; you must have another definition which must have more ingredients into it, and so, *Prayer is* (nothing else but) *an expression or offering of those holy, and good dispositions*

3 Things considerable, for opening of the words.

2. What *prayer* is.

1. In generall.

2. In speciall.

sions to God, that arise from the Spirit, or the regenerate part. In the Name of Iesu Christ. Where you are to observe this; That the prayers which wee make, are divided into one of these two sorts:

• First, some are such prayers as are the expressions of our owne spirits, the voyce of our owne spirits, and there is nothing but flesh in them; such prayers any naturall man may make to the Lord: And these the Lord regards not, he knowes not the meaning of them, that is, he doth not accept them.

Secondly, there are prayers that are the voyce of Gods owne Spirit, that is, such as arise from the regenerate part that is within us, which is quickened and enlarged to pray from the immediate helpe of the Holy Ghost; these prayers are onely accepted, and of these it is said, *He knowes the meaning of the Spirit*: that is, hee so knowes it, and sees it, that also he accepts it. Therefore you shall see in *Hosea 7. 14.* when they prayed, and prayed earnestly, yea, not only set a day apart for prayer, But also called a solemne Assembly, and kept a fast, yet, saith the Lord plainly, *Ye did not call upon me when you howled upon your beds; for (saith he) you assembled your selves for corne, and for wine;* which any naturall man may doe: And therefore (saith he) it is but an *howling*; it is as the voice of beasts, to seeke for wine, and oyle, and corne; but no prayer, for he saith plainly, *You called not upon me, when notwithstanding, they spent a whole day in prayer.* The meaning is, that the Lords regards this as no prayer at all.

Division of prayers into two sorts.

I

Such as come from our owne spirits.

Note.

2

Such as come from Gods Spirit.

Rom. 8. 17.

Hosea 7. 14.

Prayers of wicked men howlings.

The termes of
the descrip-
tion opened.

Why bee u-
seth the word
(dispositions)
rather than
desires.

When the de-
sires and dis-
positions of
men are good.

Quest.

Answ.

That tempo-
rall things may
be desired in a
carnall man-
ner, and car-
nall things in
a spirituall
manner and
how.

And therefore to open a little this description unto you; (for it is one maine businesse that wee have to doe, in handling of this Text, to describe to you the meaning of this precept, What the nature of *Prayer* is;) that you may know what kind of *Prayer* it is, that prevails with God. I say, *It is an expression of holy and good dispositions*: I use that expression rather of *dispositions*, than *desires*; because there is some part of *prayer* that stands in thanksgiving, when you desire nothing at Gods hands, but give thanks for that you have received; marke, first, that they must be *holy and good*, the desires and dispositions must be good: for that is a rule, *all the affections and desires are good, or evill, according as their objects are*; those that are fixed upon good things, are good desires.

You will say then, what are the good things that make the desires and dispositions of the heart good?

They are temporall things, and spirituall both. A man may pray for temporall things in a spirituall manner, and the desire may be good; and againe, he may pray for spirituall things in a carnall manner, and the desire may be naught. Therefore that must be observed withall, that it is not simply the object, but there is a certaine manner of desiring too: For example, if a man pray for temporall things, for outward comforts, such things as belong to the present estate of his body here; If he pray for them with these conditions, that he may have that which is conveni-

ent

ent for him, he prayes for such a measure as God sees to be meet, as *Pro. 30. Feed me with convenient food for me*; this prayer is good. But (if any man will be rich, as *1 Tim. 6.*) it is an inordinate desire, when men will have excesse of these outward things, and more than is fit for them. And again, if you desire that which is *convenient*, and spend it upon your lusts, if you desire health, and long life, that you may live more pleasantly, if you desire wealth, that you may live more deliciously, and not simply that which the creature may desire, and to the end that you may be the more enabled to serve the Lord in these things, your desire is not good. So I say, first it must be for that which is *convenient*, secondly, you must not spend it upon your lusts, but in Gods service:

And lastly, wee must pray for them in a right method; *First seeke the kingdome of God, and then other things*, that is, Chiefely and in the first place, pray for spirituall things, and then afterwards for temporall in order unto them. We should so pray for temporall things, as our prayers may be spiritual. On the other side, a man may pray for spirituall things in a carnall manner, as for temporall things in a spirituall manner. A naturall man may pray earnestly for faith, and for grace, and repentance; not out of any beauty that hee sees in them, not out of any taste and relish that he hath of them, but because he thinkes them a bridge to leade him to Heaven, and that he cannot come thither without them: when he considers in his heart that he cannot bee

Prov. 30. 8.

1. Tim. 6. 9.

When the desire of outward things is good

How a carnall man may pray for grace.

SPIRA his
case,

saved without these things, I say, then hee may desire them, and that earnestly. It was the case of *Francis Spira*, who cryed so earnestly for grace, that he might have but a drop of it, because hee could not be saved without it, and he gives the reason himselfe, when he said withall, he saw no excellency in it, he desired it not for it selfe, and therefore he thought his prayers should not bee heard. Thus you see that prayer is an *expression of holy and good desires*.

These desires
must bee offered
to God.

Again, it is an *offering them up to the Lord*: But I will not stand upon that (you are well enough instructed in it) that whatsoever petition is made to the creature, it is not a prayer, it must onely be offered up to the *Lord*.

Arising from
the spirit, or
regenerate
part.

Then I adde, it is an expression of such desires as must arise from the *unregenerate part*, that is, look how much there is of the *regenerate part* in a prayer, looke how much the *holy Spirit* hath to doe in it, look how much comes from that which is called the *inward man*, so farre it is sanctified, so far that prayer is accepted, and no further. But, that we may open this a little more fully, we wil shew you it by some other expressions of prayer, that we finde in the Scriptures.

Expressions
of prayer in
the Scrip-
tures.

1 Sam. i. 7.

Prayer is called a *lifting up of the heart to God*, a *pouring forth of the soule to the Lord*, 1 Sam. i. 7. A *serving of him in spirit*, so Paul calleth it. Now if wee open these phrases a little, you shall know more fully wherein the nature of right praying to God consists. That phrase the Apostle useth (*whom I serve in my spirit*) is the same word in the origi-
nall

nal that is used for fasting & prayer. Now what is it to pray to God in the spirit? for we may say, a man cannot make a prayer, but there is an act of his mind goes to it, & every man, what service soever he performes, his spirit must needs have a hand in it, so that it cannot be performed without the minde.

I take this to be the meaning of it, for the Apostles scope is, to distinguish the true and holy services of God from those that are but shadows and counterfeit, and as it were, but the body and carcasse of right service. Therefore, when he saith, *I serve the Lord in my spirit*, or, *I pray in the spirit*, the meaning is this, the prayer of a man is not onely that which the understanding dictates to him, but when the whole soule, the will & affections go together with his petition, & whatsoever the petition is, a mans heart is affected accordingly. As for example, If a man come to confesse his sins, & yet slights them inwardly in his heart: if a man pray for reconciliation with God, & yet have no longing & sighing in his heart after it; if he earnestly ask grace, & the mortification of sinful lust, when the heart doth not inwardly seeke it, now hee prayes not in the spirit. To pray in the spirit is as that in *Ioh. 4. 24.* *He will be worshipped in spirit and in truth*: the meaning is, so to pray as the heart go together with our petition. The same also is the meaning of that when a man powreth forth his soule before the Lord: So *Hannah* saith of her selfe, *I am a woman troubled*, &c. and powre out my soule before the Lord: which is not when a man deli-

To serve God
in the Spirit,
what.

Ioh. 4. 24.

To powre out
the soule to
God, what.

Austin.

S. imile.

Note.

vers to God that which the understanding & mind hath devised only, (for prayer is not a worke of wit, nor of memorie,) but when a man powreth forth his whole soule (that is) his will and affections, when they goe together, and there is no reservation in his minde, but all within him is opened and explicate, and exposed to the view of the Lord; not as *Austin* saith of himselfe, when he came to pray for the mortifying of his lusts, saith hee, *I had a secret inward desire that it should not be done.* Therefore when the soule is powred forth, the meaning is that all must be opened to him, so that when a man will make an acceptable prayer, hee must make this accompt, he must then call in all his thoughts and affections, & recollect them together as the lines in the center, or as the Sunbeames in a burning glasse, and that makes prayer to be hot and fervent; whereas otherwise it is but a cold and dissipated thing, that hath no strength or efficacie in it.

Now withall this you must know, that when we say the whole soule must goe together with the petition, the meaning is, that not onely the will and affections be imployed, (for in a naturall man, in his desire of health, when he is sicke or wanteth assistance and guidance in difficult cases, not onely the understanding, but the will & affections are busie enough it is likely,) but also we adde further that that which is called the *spirit*, and is diffused through the whole soule, be set on worke also in the performance of this holy duty to the Lord, whensoever wee seek to him in prayer.

For

For this you must know, that there are two things in a regenerate man, (for you must take for granted by the way, that no naturall man is able to make a prayer acceptable to God, seeing there is no Spirit in him, but in the regenerate man) there is, I say, flesh & spirit: now when we come to powre forth our hearts to the Lord, that which lyes uppermost, will be ready to be powred forth first; and that which is spirituall, it may be lyes in the bottome, and is kept in; so that a man may make a carnall prayer, though he be a holy man; that is, when the flesh hath gotten the upper hand, as in some fits it may; whe the mind is filled with worldly sorrow, and worldly rejoycing, and worldly desires, and these (lying uppermost) will be soonest expressed: such a prayer the Lord regards not, though the man be holy, from whence it comes; but right prayer is this, when the regenerate parts is acted & stirred up, & the flesh, that alwayes hinders, is removed. For you must know this, that wheresoever there is a regenerate part in any man, there is a great aptnesse in that to call upon God; and it cannot be disjoyned from it, but that is not alwayes in act.

As we see a fountain, it hath alwayes an aptnesse to powre forth water, it is ready to breake into a current, but if it be stopped with stones and mud, or other impediments, it cannot breake out: so he that is a regenerate man, that hath a holy part in him, there is an aptnesse to prayer. Which is that which our Saviour saith, *Mat. 26. 41. The spirit is willing, that is, there is alwayes a willingnesse*

Two things in a man regenerate, to make a prayer acceptable. No naturall man can make an acceptable prayer.

A holy man may make a carnall prayer

Right prayer, what.

simile.

An aptnesse in the regenerate part to prayer. *Mat. 26. 41.*

How the spirit
helps our in-
firmities.

Rom. 8. 27.

Simile.

Offered up in
the name of
Iesus Christ.

2 Chron. 26.

ness that followes the spirit, or the regenerate part in a holy man, but, saith he, *the flesh is backward*; that is it that stops this fountaine, & therefore *Rom. 8. 27. The spirit is said there to helpe our infirmities, and to make our requests for us*; that is, even as a man removing stones from a fountaine with his hands, makes the water a passage to breake out into a current; so the *holy Ghost* removes this flesh, which stops up this current, the spirit takes away those carnall impediments that are in us: and not onely so, but stirreth up the regenerate part; and when that is done, we are able to make a spirituall praier unto God in *Christ Iesus*; So, that is the thing that you are now to observe, that the *Spirit* must helpe our infirmities, when wee come to call upon God, and our prayers be so farre acceptable as they be the fruits of the regenerate part; now we want but one thing added in the definition,

They are such prayers as are offered to God in the name of Iesus Christ.

This is a thing that you all know, that those prayers that are not offered up in Christ, are not acceptable, because the person is not regarded. It was the sinne of *Uzziah* in 2 *Chron. 26*. Hee would goe to the Temple himselfe being a King on the throne, and he would offer incense without a Priest. We doe the very selfe-same thing, whensoever we go to offer up any prayer to God without *Iesus Christ*. In the old Law men might bring their sacrifices, but still the Priest must offer them; so must wee here, and the reason is gi-

ven,

ven, *Revel. 8.* because the prayers that come from
us favour of the flesh, from which they come:
and the *Angel* of the Covenant *mingleth much in-
cense with them*, and makes them sweet and accep-
table to God, *with much incense*, that is, as the flesh
is more, so there needs more incense, that they
may be made acceptable to God the Father. So
that we have indeed a double intercessor, one is,
the Spirit that helps our infirmities, that helps us
to make our petitions, that quickens & enlargeth
our hearts to prayer: The other is the *Intercessor*
to make them acceptable to God, that he may re-
ceive them, and not refuse and reject them. So
much shall serve for the first thing, to shew you
what the duty is, what a right, true, and accepta-
ble prayer is.

Now for the second, *why we must pray*: For this
objection a man may make, the Lord knowes my
mind well enough, and what needs such an ex-
pression of it by prayer? The reasons briefly why
the Lord will have us to pray, are taken;

Partly from himselfe.

And partly from us.

I. From himselfe, though he be willing to be-
stow mercies upon us, yet he wil have us aske his
leave before he gives the. As (you know) fathers
do with their children, though they intend to be-
stow such things upon them as are needfull, yet
they will have their children to aske them, and as
it is a common thing among men, though they be
willing a man should passe thorow their ground
yet they will have leave asked, because by that
meanes

Revels.
Why we must
offer our pray-
ers in Christ's
Name.

Intercessor
double.

2
Why the Lord
will have us to
pray, seeing he
knowes our
wants.

I
In respect of
himselfe.
Simile.

Simile.

To acknow-
ledge his pro-
perty in his
gifts.

Simile.

To honour
him.

Simile.

Glory what.

meanesthe property is acknowledged, otherwise it would be taken as a common high way; so the Lord will have his servants come and aske, that they may acknowledge the property hee hath in those gifts hee bestowes upon them: Indeed otherwise wee would forget by what tenure wee hold those blessings we enjoy, and what service we owe to the Lord; as you know there is an homage due to every Lord of a Mannor that hee might be acknowledged of his Tenants; so the Lord will have this dutie of prayer performed, that wee may acknowledge that wee hold all of him, and that we might remember the service we ought to doe him, to rise and goe at his command; that is, to doe his service, which we would be ready to forget, if we were not accustomed to the duty of calling on him.

Likewise he will have it done for his honours sake, he will have men call upon him, that they may learne to reverence him, and likewise that others might be stirred up to reverence him, and to honour him, and to feare him. The servants of a Prince doing honour and reverence to their Lord, stir up those that are lookers on: And as the Schoolemen say of glory, Glory is properly this, not when a man hath an excellency in him, (for that he may have, and yet bee without glory) but glory is an ostentation, a shewing out of that excellency. It is the phrase that is used in the Sacrament, You shall celebrate the Sacrament, that you may *shew forth the Lords death*; so the Lord will have us come and call up-

on

on his name to shew forth the duty of praier, and that we may shew forth his glory. This is for the Lord himselfe.

Now from our selves; we are to do it, partly, that the graces of his Spirit may be increased in us: for prayer exerciseth our graces, every grace is exercised in prayer, and they being exercised are increased. See an excellent place for this in *Iude 20.* That you may edifie your selves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost; as if he should say; the way to edifie your selves, and build up your selves, is to pray in the Holy Ghost; that is, by spirituall prayer, made through the power, and assistance, and strength of the Holy Ghost: Every such prayer builds us up, it increaseth every grace in us, faith, repentance, love, obedience, and feare, all are increased by prayer.

Partly, because they being exercised and set on worke in prayer, are more ready and apt to the performance of this duty than if they should be seldome enured thereto.

And partly also, because prayer brings us to Communion with God. For if the good company of the godly one with another will increase grace, how much more will Communion with the Lord himselfe quicken and increase it?

Moreover, this dutie is required; that we may be acquainted with God, for there is a strangeness betweene the Lord and us, when we do not call upon his name. It is the command which you shall finde in *Iob 22.* Acquaint thy selfe with the Lord, that thou mayest have peace with him, and thou shalt

1 In respect of our selves.

I

That the graces in us may be increased.

Iude 20.

2

To exercise grace.

3

To bring us to communion with God.

4

To avoid strangeness with God.

Iob 22. 21.

Simile.
How acquaintance is gotten
and lost.

Shall have prosperity. Now, you know how acquaintance growes amongst men; it is by conversing together, by speaking one to another. On the other side, we say, when that is broken off, when they salute not, or speak not one to another, a strangeness growes; so it is in this: when we come to the *Lord*, and are frequent, and fervent in this duty of calling upon him, we grow acquainted with him, but without it we grow strangers, and the *Lord* dwells afar off, neither are we able to behold him, except we be accustomed to it, for the more we come into his presence, the more we are acquainted with him. Therefore that is another reason why we should use this, that we may get acquaintance with the *Lord*.

5
To teach us
thankfulness.

Likewise, that we may learne to be thankfull to him for those mercies we have received from him; for if *God* should bestow mercies upon us unasked, we would forget them, his hand would not be acknowledged in them; and we would not see his providence in disposing those blessings that we do enjoy, but when we come to aske every thing before him, we are then ready to see his hand more, and to prize it more, and we are disposed to more thankfulness. So that it is a sure rule commonly, What we wiane with prayer, that we weare with thankfulness, and that which we get without prayer, we spend, and use without any lifting up of the heart to *God*, in praising him, and acknowledging his hand in bestowing it upon us: so you see what this duty is. And,

Note.
What we get
without pray-
er, is spent un-
thankfully.

Secondly,

Secondly, why the Lord will have this dutie performed.

Now, thirdly, (in a word) what is it to *pray continually*? The word in the originall signifieth, such a performance of this dutie, as that you doe not cease to doe it, at such times as God requires it at your hands. Compare this with that in the second Epistle to *Timothy* 1. 3. The Apostle saith there, that hee hath him in *continuell remembrance, praying for him night and day*, where the same word is used that is here. Now we cannot thinke that the Apostle had *Timothy* in continuall remembrance; that hee was never out of his thought, but the meaning is, when hee did call upon God, from day to day, hee still remembred him. So that to *pray continually* is to pray very much, to pray at those times when God requires us to pray. For it is the definition that Philosophers give of Idlenes, a man is then said to bee idle, when hee doth not that which he ought, in the time when it is required of him. He is an idle man that workes not when hee ought to worke; so hee is said not to pray continually, that prayes not when he ought to pray. In a like manner I conceive this to be the meaning of the Apostle, *Rejoyce evermore, Phil. 4. 4.* so here when he comes to this exhortation of prayer, hee contents not himselfe to say, pray very often, but *pray continually*, as wee use to expresse our selves when wee would have a thing frequently done, wee say, see that you bee alwayes doing of this. So the Apostles scope is

3. What it is to pray continually.

Aristot. 1^{us}.

2 Tim. 1. 3.

Idlenes, what

Obs.

A constant course of prayer, at least twice a day is our dutie.

Quest.

2. Answ.

The grounds of it.

1 From the text.

2 From examples.

Dan. 6. 3.

3. From reasons.

1 That God might be worshipped.

to shew that it should be exceeding often, and that it should be very much done. Hence we gather this by the way.

That wee are bound to keepe our constant course of calling upon God, at the least twice a day, whatsoever we doe more.

But you will say, what ground have you for that, why doe you instance in that twice a day?

The ground of it is this, in that the Apostle bids us *pray continually*, that is, doe it exceeding much, doe it very often, the least we can doe it is twice a day, we may doe it oftener, but that, I say is the least. When we have such a command as this, when we have such a precept as this, *pray continually*, and this rule illustrated by such examples as we have in the Scripture, why is it recorded, if it be not true of every example in that kind that is said of the generall example, 1 Cor. 10. *They are written for our learning?* When it is said that David prayed oft, and Daniel expressly in Dan. 6. 3. *He prayed three times a day*, that was his constant course, I say, we may thinke wee are bound to doe it at the least twice a day.

Consider also a little the reason of it, why wee are bound to doe it; In the Temple, you know the Lord was worshipped twice a day, there was *the morning and evening sacrifice*. What was the ground of that commandement? There was no reason of it, but that the Lord might bee worshipped, and that was the time that he would have it done, twice a day, morning and evening: but besides that, it was not onely that

that the Lord might be worshipped, (wherin we should follow that example of worshipping him morning and evening.) But likewise our occasions are such, that, that is the least we can doe, to call upon him constantly morning and evening: for there is no day but wee use many blessings, and we take many of his creatures. Now we may not take any of them without his leave; so that thou art bound to aske for them before thou take them, and pray for a blessing upon them, or else thou hast no right to them, thou hast no lawfull use of them: that place is plaine, *1 Tim. 4. Every Creature of God is good, and ought not to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by prayer.* So that, if you take common blessings every day, and doe not seeke them at the Lords hands before you take them, they are not sanctified unto you, you have not a lawfull use of them, you have no right unto them.

²
That we may
use blessings
aright.

1 Tim 4-4.

Besides, my beloved, it is that which the Lord commands in every thing, *Make your requests knowne in every thing*, that is, whensoever you neede any thing, make your requests knowne; so *in every thing give thanks.* And therefore the least we can doe when we have received, and doe need so many mercies, is to give thanks, and to seeke to him so often, from day to day.

³
From Gods
command.

Moreover, do not our hearts need it, are they not readie to go out of order, are they not readie to contract hardnesse, are they not readie to goe from the Lord, and to be hardened from Gods feare? Therefore this dutie is needfull, in that re-

⁴
To keepe
our hearts in
order.

C

gard,

5
To get for-
giveness of
daily finnes.

gard, to compose them, and bring them backe againe into order.

Lastly, doe not the finnes we commit daily, put a necessitie upon us of doing this, that they may be forgiven, and done away, and that wee may be reconciled to God againe? Therefore doe not thinke that it is an arbitrary thing to call upon God, twice a day, because there is no particular expresse command; for if you consider these places that I have named, and the reasons, wee shall see there is a necessitie lies upon us to doe it. So much shall serve for that, I come now to make some use of this that hath beene delivered.

Vse I.
Shewing the
misery of wic-
ked men, in
that they can-
not pray.

First, in that such prayers as the Lord accepts, are an expression of holy desires, such desires, I meane, as rise from the regenerate part of a man: Hence then we see that all naturall men are in a miserable condition, when times of extremitie come, & when the day of death comes, whē there is no other helpe in the world, but seeking to the Lord, when all the creatures forsake them, & are not able to help them, & there is no way to go to the Lord but by prayer; if prayer be an effect and fruit only of the regenerate part of a man, wherof a carnall man is not partaker, then he is in a miserable condition. Therefore let such men consider this as put all off to times of extremity. Put the case, thou hast warning enough, at such a time, & hast the use of thy understanding, yet thou art not able to doe any good without this regeneration; for, if there be not grace in the heart, thou art

Note.

not

not able to make a spirituall prayer to the Lord, such as hee accepts. Therefore take heed of deferring and putting off, labour to be regenerate, to have your hearts renewed, while you have time, and if thou be not able to call upon God in the time of health, how wilt thou doe it when thy wits, and thy spirits are spent and lost, in the times of sicknesse and extremitie? Therefore let that be considered, which we doe but touch by the way briefly.

Secondly, if the Lord command this, if it bee the command of God, *Pray continually*: Then take heed of neglecting this duty, rather bee exhorted to be frequent, and fervent in it, *to continue therein, and watch thereto with all perseverance.* It is a common fault amongst us, either wee are ready to omit it, or come to it unwillingly, or else we performe it in a carelesse and negligent manner, not considering what a command lyeth upon the sonnes of men to performe it constantly and conscionably. I beseech you therefore consider first, that it is a priviledge purchased by the blood of *Iesus Christ*; *Christ* died for this end, it cost him the shedding of his blood, *That we through him, might have entrance to the throne of grace*: and will you let such a priviledge as this lye still? If you do, so far as is in you, you cause his blood to be shed in vaine: for if you neglect the priviledges gotten by that blood, so far you neglect the blood that procured them; but to neglect this dutie, is to neglect that. Besides, if wee aske you the reason, why you abstain from other sins, why

Use 2.

Eph. 6

Motives to prayer.

I
Christ dyed for this end.

2
It is Gods command.

C 2

you

you steale not, why you commit not adultery, and murther; The reason that you give, is, because the *Lord* hath commanded you. Hath not the *Lord* commanded you to pray constantly, at all times? If you make conscience of one commandement, why doe you not of another?

3
The example
of Saints.
Dan. 6. 10.

Consider *Daniel* in this case, in the 6. of *Daniel*, he would not omit a constant course of prayer, he did it three times a day, and that was his ordinary custome. If he would not omit it to spare his life, if he would not omit it in such a case of danger as that, why will you omit it for businesse, for a little advantage, for a little gaine, for a little wealth, or pelfe, or pompe, or pleasure, or whatsoever may draw you from that dutie?

4
The equitie
of it.

Doe but consider what an unreasonable, and unequall thing it is, that when the *Lord* gives us meate and drinke, and cloathes, from day to day, when he gives us sleepe every night, when he provides for us such comforts, as wee have need of, so that the least creature doth not us any service, but as farre as he sets it on worke to doe that service, for us to forget him, and not to give him thanks, and not to aske these things at his hands, not to seeke unto him, but to live as without *G O D* in the world, as many doe, who neglect this duty: I say, it is a profession of living without *G O D* in the world; wee are strangers to him, it is open rebellion against him. Therefore take heed of omitting it, take heed of neglecting it.

Besides

Besides all this, wee should doe it for our owne sakes, if wee consider what use we have of this dutie for our selves, Is it not the key that openeth all Gods treasures? When heaven was shut up, was not this the key that open'd it? When the wombes were shut up, was not this it that opened them? You know, *Elijah prayed for raine*; so we may say for every other blessing. All Gods treasures are locked up to those that doe not call upon his name, this opens the doore to them all, whatsoever they be that we have occasion to use, this is effectuell. And this doth it better then any thing besides; If a man be sicke, I will be bold to say, a faithfull praier is more able to heale his disease than the best medicine; *The praier of faith shall heale the sicke, I am. 5.* You know the woman that had the bloody issue, when shee had spent all upon Physicians, and could doe no good, than she comes to Christ, and offered a faithfull prayer to him that did it, when so many yeeres physicke could not doe it. *Beloved*; if there be a Prince, or a great man, whose mind wee would have turned toward us; a faithfull prayer will doe it sooner than the best friends. So it was with *Nehemiah*, you know his request, that the Lord would give him favour in the sight of the man; if we be in any strait, as it was in *Iosephs* case, if we have any difficult matter to bring to passe, this prayer and seeking to the Lord, will expedite, & set us at libertie sooner, it will finde a way to bring it about more than all the wits in the world, because it sets God on worke. You have no power to doe any thing.

5
The benefit of it.

Prayer the key to unlooke Gods treasures.

James 5.

Nehem. I. II.

Prevalent
prayer.

Certainly a praying Christian that is prevalent and potent with God, (that seekes to him) he is able to do more than all the witches in the world; for they set the Divell a worke, but prayer sets God a worke, it sets him a worke to do us good, to heale us, and to deliver us out of extremities: and therefore, I say, for our owne sakes, even out of selfe-love, and for common comforts, you have neede to use this. Certainly, if these things were beleaved, (for you heare them only, you give us the hearing for the time, but if they were beleaved,) many would be more frequent in this duty, they would not be so negligent in it, or come in so carelesse a manner to it.

6

It is the best
way to fill the
heart with joy.

Furthermore, I beseech you to consider this; every man desires joy and comfort, and commonly one thing that keepes us off from this duty, is sports and pleasures, one thing or other, that wee take delight in, which dampe and hinder us in these things, in spirituall performances: Prayer is the best way of all other to fill thy heart with true joy, as wee see in *Joh. 16. 24.* he saith there, *In my name ye have asked nothing hitherto, but now aske, that your joy may be full.* This is one motive that Christ useth to exhort us to be frequent in this duty, that our joy may be full; which I take to be the meaning of that in *James 5.* *If any man be sad, let him pray,* not onely because prayer is suitable to such a disposition, but likewise it will cheere him up, it is the way to get comfort; *If any be sad, let him pray.* So it is in *Phil. 4. 6.* *In all things make your requests knowne, and the peace of God shall keepe*

Joh. 16. 24.

James 5. 23.

Phil. 4. 6.

keep you in the communion of Iesus Christ: That is it that brings peace, and quietnesse; and therefore there is much reason why we should be constant in this dutie, it is that which quickens us, it is that which fills us with joy, and comfort, and with true peace, which every one desires.

Moreover, consider it is thy buckler, prayer is the helmet that keeps thee safe, when a man neglects it, when he ceaseth to go to God by prayer, when he once shewes himselfe to be a stranger to the Lord by neglecting this dutie, then he is out of the pales of his protection, like the conies that goe out of their burrowes; for so is the Lord to those that pray, the Lord is a protection to those that call upon his name. The very calling upon his name is a running under Gods wings, as it were, that is, a putting our selves under his shadow; but when thou neglectest that, thou wandrest abroad from him. Now doe we not neede protection from outward dangers, from day to day? doe we not need to be kept from the inward danger of sinne and temptation? Surely prayer is one part of the spirituall Armour, as we see Eph. 6. In the compleat Armor of God, prayer is reckoned up the last, as that which buckles up all the rest, saith the Apostle, Continue in prayer, & watch so it with perseverance. And you have the more reason to do it, because it is not only a part of this armour, but it enables you to use all the rest, to use the word, and to use faith, for prayer stirres them up all. What is it to have Armour, and not to have it readie? now prayer makes it ready. Therefore you

7
Our safetie
consists in it.

Eph. 6.

Prayer teacheth to use the rest of the spirituall armour.

Mat. 26. 41.

And wo
shall be

Note.

Wee cannot
love Christ,
but wee must
call upon him.

see *Christ* prescribes the same rule in *Mat. 26. 41.*
Pray that you enter not into temptation: as if that
 were the way to secure us, to shelter and to keep
 us safe from falling into temptation. It is a thing
 I would advise you to, to pray, and to seeke to
 the *Lord* continually. Therefore, if wee should
 use onely this one reason to you, to be constant
 in this duty, because it is for your safetie,
 it were sufficient. You know, when a man is in a
 City whose walles are broken downe, when hee lies
 exposed to temptation, he is in a dangerous case.
 So I may use this *Dilemma* to you, if you have a
 disposition, and you thinke thus, I hope I am well
 enough, I hope my heart is in a temper good
 enough, I am not now exposed to any tempta-
 tion, I feare nothing, make this argument against
 thy selfe, Why doe I neglect so good a gale, if
 my heart be so well disposed to pray, why doe I
 then omit it? Againe, if there be any indisposi-
 tion in me, why doe I hazard my selfe? what if Sa-
 tan should set upon thee? what if the world
 should set upon thee? what if a sutable tempta-
 tion agreeable to thy lusts be offered? art thou not
 in danger? and therefore a constant course should
 be kept in it, we should take heed of being negli-
 gent in it. And will a man now professe that hee
 hopes he is the servant of *God*, and in a good e-
 state, although he do not pray so much as others,
 (we speak not of frequency simply, but of such a
 performance as is required) I say, to professe that
 thou art a servant of *Christ*, and that thou lovest
 him, and that hee is thy husband, and that thou
 art

art his servant, and yet callest not upon him from day to day, this is an idle thing, it is impossible; if thou diddest love him, thou wouldest expresse thy selfe in calling upon his name. Shall a friend that is an acquaintance only to us, in whom wee delight, but come to us, and wee are willing to spend many houres with him; and shall we professe our selves to be friends of *God*, and him to be our friend, and that wee delight in him, and yet neglect this duty? This is a common thing amongst you, when you see a man that meditates all his matters himselfe, or if hee doe open his minde, and tell them to some bodie else, it must be such an one as professeth to be a friend to him; now if this friend should never heare from him, nor hee should never speake to him, or if hee doe, it is in such a negligent manner, as it may appeare, hee doth not trust him, hee doth not regard what he can doe for him, and he doth it so shortly, that he can scarcely tell what the businesse is; I say, in such a case, would you not reckon his profession of friendship to be an idle and empty profession? Now apply it to thy selfe, those that say they have communion with *God*, and they hope their estate is good enough, they stand in good tearmes with him, but yet, if they be in any necessity, for all the matters and occasions that fall out from day to day, either they thinke of them in themselves, or they are apt enough to declare them to man, or if they goe to *God*, they doe it negligently, they poast over the matter, so as they have:

Simile.


If wee be friends of *God* wee must acquaint him with our state by prayer.

have scarce leasure to expresse themselves and
 their doings; doe you thinke he will take such
 for friends? and do you thinke, that this is a true,
 sound, and hearty profession? Therefore
 (to end this) I beseech you consider it,
 and take heede of being remisse
 and negligent in it; for you see
 it is a command from the
Lord, Pray continually.

FINIS.



THE



THE SECOND SERMON.

1 THESS. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

NO T to repeat what hath been delivered, but to presse this point on us a little further, (for, what is more necessary, than that wee should keepe a constant course in this duty, since the very life of Religion consists in it?) I adde this to all I pressed in the morning, that if you doe neglect this dutie, it exposeth you to great disadvantage, both for the outward man, and for the inward man; and there are but these two that you neede to care for.

8

The omission
of it doth dis-
advantage
men.

For

I
In the out-
ward man.

Simile.

For the outward man, it deprives you of the blessing: put the case, you have never to good successe in your enterprizes; put the case you have outward comforts in abundance, yet still the blessing is wanting; and not onely so, but it uncovers the rooffe, as it were, and the curse is rained downe upon your tables, upon your meat and drinke, upon all the endeavours, and all the enterprizes you take in hand. We consider not what we do, when we neglect this dutie, to what danger wee expose our selves unto from day to day, for it is one thing to have outward comforts, and another thing to have the blessing with them.

2
In the inward
man.

Simile.

Againe, consider what losse you suffer in the inward man, when ye neglect this duty at any time; for that is readie to be distempered, and to goe out of order, it is readie to contract hardnesse, to contract soile, spirituall grace is ready to decay. It falls out with a mans heart, as it doth with a garden that is neglected, it will quickly be overrunne with weedes, if you looke not diligently to it; and the way to looke to it, is constancie in this dutie. That is a notable place, *Iob* 15. 4. when *Eliphaz* observed some distemper in *Iobs* affections (as he apprehended it) he tels him that the speech hee used was not comely, but vaine, and sinfull: and what then? Surely *Iob* (saith hee) thou restrainest prayer from the Lord: As if he should say, It is impossible, *Iob*, that thou shouldest fall into these distempers, if thou diddest keepe thy course constantly in this duty; there-
fore

Iob 15. 4.

fore surely (saith he) thou restrainest prayer from the Lord; So it is with us, let us reſtaine prayer from God, and diſtempers will ariſe quickly in our ſpirits, worldly-mindedneſſe will be readie to grow upon us, we ſhall be apt to be carnall, we ſhall forget God, and forget our ſelves, and forget the good purpoſes, and deſires we had: and therefore that you may keepe your hearts in order, you muſt keepe a conſtant courſe in this dutie: which if you do, though your peace be interrupted, this will repaire it againe, it will make up the breaches againe, though there be ſome diſtempered affections that grow upon us, yet prayer will compoſe all. As ſleepe compoſeth drunkenneſſe, ſo prayer will compoſe the affections: a man may pray himſelfe ſober againe, nothing doth it ſooner, nothing doth it more effectually; and this you ſhall finde, that as you either omit it, or ſlight it over, ſo you ſhall finde a proportionable weakenefſe growing upon the inward man, as the bodie feeles, when it neglecteth either ſleepe, or dyet, or exerciſe: therefore to end this exhortation, let us be conſtant in it.

Onely remember this, (when wee exhort you thus to keepe a conſtant courſe, for which you heard ſo many reaſons in the morning, I ſay, remember this caution) that if it be performed in a formall, or in a cuſtomary and overly manner, you were as good to omit it altogether: for the Lord takes not our prayers by number, but by waight: when it is an outward picture, a dead

carcaſſe

Inward diſtempers ariſe, if praier be neglected.

ſimile.

We were as good not pray at all, as doe in a formall overly manner.

When prayer
is performed
aright.

Simile.

Simile.

Prayer in a cu-
stomary man-
ner, amends
not the heart.

carcasse of prayer, when there is no life, no ser-
veney in it, hee regards it not. Bee not deceived
in this, it is a very usuall deceit; it may bee a
mans conscience would bee upon him, if hee
should omit it altogether; and therefore when
hee doth something, his heart is satisfied, and
so he growes worse and worse: therefore confi-
der, I say, that the very doing of the dutie, is
not that which the Lord heeds, but hee will
have it so performed, that the end may bee ob-
tained, and that the thing may bee effected, for
which you pray. If a man send his servant to goe
to such a place, it is not his going to and fro
that he regards, but hee would have him to dis-
patch the businesse; so in all other workes, hee
cares not for the formality of performance, but
would have the thing so done, that it may bee
of use to him: If you set a servant to make a fire
for you, and he goe, and lay some greene wood
together, and perhaps put a few coales under,
this is not to make a fire for you, but hee must ei-
ther get dry wood, or he must blow till it burne,
and be fit for use: so when your hearts are unfit,
when they are like greene wood, when you come
to warme them, and to quicken them by prayer
to God, it may be you pass over this duty, and
leave your hearts as cold, and as distempered as
they were before: My Beloved, this is not to per-
forme this duty. This duty is effectually perfor-
med, when your hearts are wrought upon by it,
and when they are brought to a better tune, and
to a better temper than they were before. If you
find

find sinfull lusts there, your businesse is to worke them out by prayer, to reason the matter, to expostulate the thing before the *Lord*, and not to give over, till you have set all the wheelles of your soule right, till you have made your hearts perfect with *GOD*; and if you finde your hearts too much cleaving to the world, you must weane them, and take them off; if you find a deadnesse, unaptnesse and indisposition in you, you must lift up your soules to the *Lord*, and not give over till you be quickened; and this is to performe the dutie in such a manner as the *Lord* accepts, otherwise it is an hypocriticall performance: for this is hypocrisie, when a man is not willing to let the dutie goe altogether, nor yet is willing to performe it fervently, and in a quicke and zealous manner: for he that omits it altogether is a profane person, and hee that performes it zealously, and to purpose, is an holy man; but an hypocrite goes betweene both, hee would doe something at it, but hee will not doe it thoroughly. And therefore, if thou finde that thou hast slubbred over this dutie from day to day; that thou performest it in a negligent manner, and perfunctorily, know that it is an hypocriticall performance; and therefore when wee spend so much time in exhorting you to a constant course in this dutie, still remember, that you must performe it in such a manner, that it may have heat and life in it, that it may be acceptable to *GOD*, and doe good to your owne hearts, to bring them to a more holy frame of
grace,

What we must
doe in prayer.

Hypocrisie,
what.

Note.

grace, and to a better temper, than (it may bee) you found them in, when you went about the dutie.

Object. 1

This dutie requireth much time.

Answ.

Threefold.

Answ. 1

The time spent in prayer hindreth nor.

Mal. 3. 10.

Simile.

Answ. 2

It is greater than worldly businesse, and therefore should be preferred.

And if you object now; I, but it will cost us much time to doe this.

Indeed this is one common cause, among all the rest, that keeps us off from the thorow performance of this dutie, but (to speake to that in a word) remember this, that the time that is spent in calling upon God, hinders you not in your businesse, though it seeme to hinder you, and though it takes so much from the heape, yet indeed it increaseth the heape, as it is said of tithes and offerings, *Bring them in*, and thinke not, that because you lessen the heape, that you are poorer men: no, saith the Lord, it will increase your store, *I will open the windowes of heaven*, and you shall have so much the more for it; so it is true in this case. In other things you see it well enough; You know, the baiting of the horse hinders not the journey, and the oyling of the wheele, and the whetting of the scithe, though there be a stop in the worke for a time, yet, as our common saying is, *A whet is no let*, and the doing of this is no impediment.

Secondly, put the case it were, yet is it not the greater businesse? what is it that you get by all your labours, and travailes? if it be riches, it comes not into any comparison with grace and holinesse, with that riches wherewith prayer makes you rich. But, say it be somewhat more noble than that, as learning, or knowledge; yet what

what is that to the renewing of Gods Image in us? were it not better, to spend time to get grace to make us rich to God; to make us to get strength in the inward man, to passe through all varieties of afflictions, in getting that which is the chiefest excellencie of all others? for is not that the best excellencie? When Adam was in *Paradise*, the having of Gods Image, you know, it excelled all other excellencies in the world; and so it doth still; now the more you pray, the more you get of this Image: for a man of much prayer is alwaies a man of much grace, it much increaseth those spirituall gifts, which are better than all the outward things you can get by your imployment and diligence in them: therefore, I say, though it doe spend you much time, yet know (as *Christ* said to *Mary*) he that prayes much, though he bee a great loser in other things, yet he chooseth the better part.

Last of all, consider this, when thou comest to offer sacrifice to God, wouldest thou offer that which cost thee nothing? If thy continuing in prayer, and spending much time in it, should cost thee some disadvantage in thy affaires, and should lose thee that which another gaines, so that thou gettest not so much knowledge, as another man doth, thou doest not so much in thy trade, in thy businesse, thou doest not set things in order, as thou mightest have done; yet know this, that it is great wisdom to make our service to God costly to us; you know *Dauids* choise; Shall I offer to the Lord that which cost me nothing? and therefore

D

he

What is mans best excellency.

Prayer increaseth Gods Image.

Ans. 3
We must performe it, though with disadvantage, that our sacrifice may cost somewhat.

he would needs give the worth to *Araunab* the *Iebusite* for that which he bought, in like manner since it is to a good master that sees what you do, that knowes what it costeth, and what losse you are at, and withall that is willing and able to recompence it, why should you shorten this businesse, and post it over, because of other occasions, and other businesse that you have to doe?

Object. 2.
In respect of
unfitnessse.

Oh, but a man will say further, I am willing to doe it, but I am unfit for it, and it may be the longer I strive, the more unfit I grow.

Answer. 1.
God accepts
the will for the
deed, when.

To this I answer, first, in general, if thou doe it as well as thou canst, though thou doe it not so well as thou shouldest, in this case, *God accepts the will for the deed*, when a man puts his strength to it, when there is no indiligence in him, when there is no lazinesse, (for in that case he will not accept the will for the deed, but) when a man doth his utmost, as those that would have given more, and could not, their will was accepted for the deed, in *2 Cor. 8. 12*. I say, when thou doest what thou canst, when thou sparest no labour to get thy heart upon the wing, to raise and quicken it, and to enlarge it to this dutie; there *God* accepts it.

2 Cor. 8. 12, 13.

Answer. 2.
The best fit-
ting to it, is to
fall upon per-
formance.

But againe, I adde further, there is an unskilfulnesse in going about this duty: many times when we are not fit, we thinke to make our selves fitter, by spending time in thoughts, and meditations before; which I denie not but they may be profitable, but yet this I will propound to you, that

that the best way to fit our selves to this dutie, when we finde an indisposition unto it, is, not to stay till we have prepared our selves by meditation, but to fall presently upon the duty; (I will give you the reason of it) because though a preparation is required for the performance of every spirituall dutie, yet, the remote preparation is that which is intended, and meant, when we say we must prepare: for, if we speake of that which is immediate, the very doing of the dutie is the best preparation to it. For example, if a man were to runne a race, if he were to doe any bodily exercise, there must be strength of bodie, he must be fed well, that he may have abilitie; but the use of the very exercise it selfe, the very particular act, which is of the same kind with the exercise, is the best thing to fit him for it: so in this dutie of prayer, it is true, to be strong in the inward man, to have much knowledge, to have much grace, makes a man able and fit for the dutie; but if you speake of the immediate preparation for it, I say, the best way to prepare us is the very dutie it selfe, as all actions (of the same kind) increase the habits, so praier makes us fit for praier; & that is a rule, *The way to Godlinesse is in the compasse of Godlinesse it selfe*; that is, the way to grow in any grace is the exercise of that grace.

It is a point that *Luther* pressed, and he pressed it out of his owne experience, and this reason he useth; In this case, saith he, when a man goes about to fit himselfe, by working on his owne thoughts, now he goes about to overcome

D 2

his

Simile.

Exercise of
grace increaseth it.

Note.

Note this expression of *Luther*.

By labouring
against indis-
position by
our owne
strength, wee
are more in-
tangled.

his unfitnessse by his owne strength, and to contend with Satan alone; but when a man feeleth an indisposition, and goes to God by prayer, resting on God to fit him, he takes Gods strength to oppose the indisposition, and deadnesse of his flesh, and the temptations of Satan, that hinder him, and resist him. Therefore you shall find this to be the best way to fit your selves for prayer, namely to performe the dutie. If you seeke to expedite, and devolve your selves out of your unfitnessse, by the working of your owne thoughts, commonly, you involve your selves further into those labyrinths, and are caught more and more. But this I speake by the way concerning matter of unfitnessse: The maine answer to this objection is, that which I gave you before, that if a man do what he can, and do it faithfully, and in sincerity, that indisposition shall not hinder him: therefore still remember it must be done, it is not an excuse to us, at any time, nor ought to be, that we should omit the duty wholly, under pretence of an unfitnessse.

Object.

Thirdly, a man is ready to say again, But I find many difficulties, how shall I do to remove them?

Answer.
Seven Impedi-
ments in pray-
er, that makes
it difficult.

The best way hereunto I can take, is the very naming of the difficulties themselves to you, that you may know them, and make account of them; therefore consider this in generall, that it is not an easie thing to call upon God constantly: our misprision of the dutie, our reckoning of it, that it is a more facile and easie thing than it is, makes us more to slight it, and causeth

us not to goe about it with that intension, which otherwise we would, but consider a little what it is. The dutie is very spirituall, and our hearts are carnall, and it is no easie thing to bring spirituall duties, and carnall hearts together.

Then againe, our natures are very backward to come into the Lords presence, partly by reason of his great glory, by reason of his Majesty, who dwells in light unaccessible, and our weake eyes are apt to be dazeled with it, and partly out of unaccustomednesse, we are not used to it, and therefore we are ready to fly from him, as beasts that are wilde, and never were tamed to our hands, are ready to fly from us, so backward is our nature to come into his presence.

Again, the variety of occasions hinders us, every thing keeps us backe, for if a mans heart be cheerefull, it is apt to delight in other things, and if a mans heart be sad, (on the other side) if it be a slight sadnesse, men are ready to drive it away with company, and with sports, and with doing other things; But if the sadnesse be great, we are swallowed up with anguish of spirit, and then any thing is easier than to pray; as you may see by *Iudas*, it was easier for him to dispatch himselfe, than to goe and call upon *God*; so it is with men, when they have excessive griefe, when their anguish of heart is exceeding great: so that, whether a man hath a cheerefull disposition, or a sad, whether the sadnesse be great or small, still you shall finde a difficulty. If wee be idle, and have

I
Impediment:
Our hearts are
carnall.

Note.
Our backward-
nesse to come
into Gods pre-
sence, and
why.

Simile.

3
Variety of oc-
casions hinder
us.

Note.

nothing to doe, our hearts will be posselt with vaine thoughts; and if we be full of businesse, that distracts us also, and indisposeth us on the other side: so still there are impediments.

4
Worldly cares.

But there is one great impediment, among the rest, and most common, which is *worldly cares*; and worldly-mindednesse; worldly cares hinder spirituall prayer, and spirituall conference, and the holy performance (almost) of every duty; and therefore if you finde a difficulty in it, looke narrowly if that be not the cause.

5
Want of faith
in Gods power
and providence.

Againe, another great cause of this difficulty in prayer, of such backwardnesse to it, of such indisposition to it, is, because we doe not well consider the nature of *God*; we want *faith in his power*, and in his providence; we doe not consider *Gods* disposing hand, which hath the guidance in every thing that belongs to us, in health, in sicknesse, in poverty, in riches, in good success, and all success: for, if we did see the providence of *God*, and acknowledge it more, wee should be ready to call upon him; but this want of faith in his providence; that the *Lord* is not scene in his greatnesse, and in his mighty power, this causeth men to bee backward to seeke to him; but very forward to seeke to the creatures. When we have any thing to doe, of any consequence, wee are ready to pass from this man to that man; and from this meanes to that meanes; but very backward and negligent to goe to *God* in prayer, to have the thing brought to passe that wee desire; and this ariseth from want of faith,

When we are
so backward to
pray to God.

and

and from ignorance of God, and our not right consideration of him.

Besides, *Satan* hinders us exceedingly in this dutie; for he knowes of what moment it is, and of what consequence, and therefore he doth as the *Aramites* did, he fights not against small nor great, but against the King; he knowes it is this duty which quickens every grace, it is the greatest enemy which he hath, and if he can keepe us from prayer, hee hath the upper hand of us; hee hath wrested the weapon out of our hands, hee hath disarmed us, as it were, and then he may do what he will with us.

Lastly, the *sinnes* we commit, especially grosse sinnes, they are a great hindrance to this dutie, and keepe from the spirituall and cheerefull performance of it: for sinne wounds the conscience, it disjoyneth and dismembers the soule, and a disjoyned member, you know, is unfit to doe any businesse; yea, when the sinne is healed and forgiven, yet there is a sorenesse left in the heart, though some assurance of pardon should follow upon the commission of a great sinne; so that this is another impediment. But I must not stand to reckon up any more, for we shall finde enow by continuall experience.

The use wee must make of it is, that if the impediments be so many, and the difficulties that keepe us from a constant course in prayer, and from the performance of it to purpose, so great, then we must put on a resolution to breake through all, and lay it, as an inviolable law upon

6

Satan hindereth.

1 Kings 22.31.

7

The commission of great sinnes.

Simile.

Use.

What course is to be taken against these impediments.

A new indis-
position will
be on us daily
to prayer.

Note this well.

Removing the
objections that
are against
prayer, doth
strengthen us
to the duty.

our selves, that we will not alter. Let us thinke with our selves that the thing is difficult, and will cost all the care, and all the intension that may be; yea, when thou hast overcome the difficulties at one time, it may be, the next day, thou shalt meete with new conflicts, new distempers, new affections, new strength of lusts, and a new indisposition of minde will be on thee, and therefore he that will be constant in this dutie, must put on a strong resolution; as it was the saying of a holy man, (one of the holiest men that these latter times had,) that he never went to pray to God, but he found so many impediments, that except he bound himselfe by an unalterable resolution, which he resolved not to breake upon any occasion, he could never have kept a constant course in it, or, if he had, he should never have kept himselfe from a somewhat customary performance of it. But I will adde no more, to presse this upon you, there hath beene enough said, I beseech you consider it.

I come now to that I promised in the morning to doe, which is, that which doth exceedingly strengthen us to the performance of this duty of calling upon God, of *praying continually*, (which wee are here commanded to doe) is to remove certaine objections, which are in the mindes of men, that secretly weaken the estimation of this truth, and insensibly take us off, when wee marke them not: for, Beloved, when wee are so negligent in it, surely there is something that is the cause of it, and if wee could finde the cause,

cause, and remove it, wee could not spend an houre better.

The objections, that are commonly in the hearts of men, are many, I will name to you but these foure briefly:

First, a man is ready to say, what need I spend so much time, and be so large in the expression of my wants to God, when hee knowes them? I cannot make them better known to him, hee knowes them well enough already, and therefore what needeth it?

To this I answer (in a word, because it is an objection that hath not much weight in it) that it is true, the Lord knowes thy wants, but withall, hee will have thee to know them, because otherwise thou wilt not seek to him for them, thou wilt not set a price upon the things that he bestowes on thee, thou wilt not be thankfull to him, when he hath granted them, and therefore you shall finde our Saviour Christ useth this very argument, as a meanes to quicken us to prayer, saying, *For hee saith, Father knowes what you have need of; what then? Shall we not therefore pray? Yes, saith he; therefore pray ye the more earnestly, and the more importunately to him: for since he knowes your wants, hee will be more ready to heare your requests.*

I, but it will be said againe, that he doth not only know them, but he also meanes, and purposeth to bestow them: for he hath made a promise to us, and his promise is firme and sure, and God is just, and must keepe his promise, and when he hath

4 Objections
against prayer.

Obje. 1

Ans.

Why God will have us to pray though hee know our wants.

Mat. 6

Obje. 2

Ans. 1.
Though God
purposeth to
give blessings,
it is upon con-
dition that we
pray.

1 Kings 18,
41, 42.

2 Sam. 7. 11.
2 Sam. 7. 18.
Dan. 9.

Ans. 2
He will have
us doe it to
worship him.

To worship
God, what.

hath fully purposed it, what needes so much praying to bring it to passe?

I answer, the promises of *God* are to be understood with this secret condition annexed, I will doe such and such a thing for you, if you pray; though the condition be not alwayes expressed: and therefore we see when *God* promised things in particular, yet still they prayed; and prayed earnestly. When he promised *Elijah* that it should raine, yet, wee see, hee prayed, and contended much in his prayer; so when he made a promise to *David*, that he would make him a house, yet, you know, *David* went to the house of the *Lord*, & sate before him, and made earnest prayer, as you may see in the second booke of *Samuel*: so *Daniel* had a particular promise, yet he prayed, & prayed long. The example of our Saviour *Christ* is without exception; who had all the promises sure to him; yet, you see, he prayed, yea, he spent whole nights in prayer; and therefore you must understand it, that though you have a promise made, though the thing be never so sure to you; yet it is to be understood with this condition, if you call upon *God*.

Now why the *Lord* will have you do it, I shewed you many reasons in the morning, to which we will adde this one: What if the *Lord* will have thee call upon him, though he purposeth to doe the thing, even for this end, that thou mightest worship him? For, what else is it to worship the *Lord*? you shall finde this usuall in the old Testament; The people bowed themselves and worshipped; for they fell upon their faces and worshipped. This meaning

is this, to worship *God* is nothing else, but to acknowledge the worthinesse that is in him. As when you doe worship to a man, you doe use so much outward demeanour & observance to him, as may acknowledge a worth in him above another man: and as outward gesture, is the outward worshipping of *God*, so the inward worship is inwardly to acknowledge his attributes. Now you shall see, prayer gives an acknowledgement of his attributes most of any thing: for hee that prayes to *God*, he doth, in so doing, acknowledge his omnipresence, and his *omniscience*; that he heares that which the Idols of the *Gentiles* could not doe; that hee knowes the secrets of mens hearts, that neither men nor Angels can doe.

Again, it acknowledgeth his Almighty power, that hee is able to doe any thing; for that is presupposed, when we come and seeke to him.

Thirdly, it acknowledgeth his *mercy* and his goodnesse; that he is notionely able, but exceeding willing to helpe.

Lastly, it acknowledgeth his *truth*, that as he hath promised, so, I make account he will performe it, when I go and seeke to him, in a word, all the attributes of *God* are acknowledged in prayer. Therefore, therein you worship him in a speciall manner, when you goe and seeke to him, & pray to him; for in so doing you acknowledge him, yea, you acknowledge him to be a *Lord* and a father; as when wee see a childe runne to a man, and aske him blessing, when we see him aske him food:

Prayer acknowledgeth all Gods attributes.

Omniscience.

Power.

Mercie.

Truth.

Simile.

food, and rayment, wee say, surely such a man is his Father; so this very praying to God, is a worshipping of him, because it acknowledgeth his Attributes, and his relation to us, and ours to him.

Obiect. 3.

But againe, thirdly, it will be objected, I but, alas, what can the endeavours or the prayers of a weake man doe? can they change the purpose of Almighty God, if he doe not intend to doe this thing for mee, shall I hope to alter him?

Ans.
God is not
changed by
our prayers,
but our selves.

Simile,

For answer hereto, I say this, in brieft, that when you doe call upon God, hee is not changed by your prayers, but the change is wrought in you; as wee have said to you heretofore, when a Physitian is sought unto by his Patient, the patient desires him earnestly to give him such a cordiall, and such restorative Physicke, that is pleasing to him, the Physitian denies him long, yet in the end, he yeelds unto it. Why? not because there is any change in the Physitian, but because there is a change in the patient, he is now fitted for this, before he was not: so then the Physitian yeelds now, whereas before he refused; and yet the change is in the patient, and not in the Physitian: in like manner beloved, when you goe about to strive with God in prayer, when you contend, and wraastle with him, (for so we ought to doe) when you use many reasons to perswade him, you alter not him, but your selves: for those arguments that you use, are not so much to perswade him to helpe you,

you, as to perswade your owne hearts to more faith, to more love, to more obedience, to more humility and thankesfullnesse; and that indeede is the reason, why prayer prevailes with God; not that the very sending it up is that that prevailes with him, but because a faithfull and spirituall prayer puts the heart in a better disposition, so that a man is now made ready to receive a blessing at Gods hands, that before hee was not: And therefore, when you thinke you draw God to you, with your arguments, in truth, you draw your selves neerer to him, as when a man in a ship pluckes a rocke, it seemeth as if hee plucked the rocke neerer to the ship, when as indeed the ship is plucked neerer to the rocke: so, I say, wee draw our selves neerer to the Lord; now when wee draw neerer to the Lord, in prayer, and there is a spirituall disposition wrought in our hearts, by the exercise of this dutie, then indeede the Lord drawes neere to us, to send us helpe, and to grant our requests, that wee put up to him; and therefore I say, (which you should marke by the way) that every prayer, as it hath a higher pitch of holinesse in affection, and as it hath stronger arguments in it, so it is a better prayer, not because this prayer shall prevaile with God more, or, that the excellencie of this prayer should move him, but because this pitch of holy affection, and strength of argument workes upon your hearts: for the strength of arguments moves your understanding, and the holinesse of affection puts your will in a
 that frame,

Arguments in prayer are not to perswade God but our selves.

Simile.

What prayers are the best.

frame, and so disposeth your hearts, and fits you, as the patient, we spake of before, is fitted, when the Physician is willing to give the thing hee desired.

Object. 4.
Twofold.

I

But the last objection, which indeed is more than all the rest, is this;

A man is ready to say, wee see there are many men that doe not call upon *God*; and yet enjoy many mercies: it may be, a man can say with himselfe, when he did not use to pray, he had health, and sleepe, and protection.

2

Againe, on the other side, he hath prayed for such and such things, and yet they have not been granted. So this objection hath two parts, that a man hath obtained blessings, without prayer, and againe he hath prayed, and yet hee hath not obtained the blessings he sought for, at the *Lords* hands.

Answ.

For answer to the first, that men doe obtaine many blessings that doe not pray, (as how many young men are there, and old men too, that have health, and wealth, and peace, and liberty, and abundance of all things, and yet either they seeke not to *God*, or if they doe, yet not in a holy and spirituall manner) and therefore this objection had need to be answered; which I will doe with as much brevity as I can.

I

Answer to the first part of the objection.

Answ. I

First, though they have these blessings, yet they have them uncertainly, they have no promise of them, they cannot build upon them; whereas they are sure mercies to the righteous man, he can build upon these blessings: for hee
hath

hath a father to goe to, whose love he knowes, and hee hath sure promises to build on; the other, though hee hath them, yet hee is in a slippery place, when he enjoyes them; it is an accidentall thing, he hath them from the hand of an enemy, and he knowes not how long he shall enjoy them.

But I answer againe, (which is the chiefe answer to this objection) that there is a great deale of difference betweene having blessings through the providence of God, and between having them from the mercy of God, and by vertue of his promise, and out of his love to us in *Christ Iesus*. A naturall man may have many blessings of God, (so God said that he made *Ieroboam* a King, he gave him a Kingdome; and many such passages we shall finde, when men come unjustly to them, as he did to the Kingdome, yet God saith, he did it, that is, it was by his providence) and yet hee hath them not in mercy: for if thou hast these blessings, health and sleepe, and successe in thy enterprises, from day to day, and yet thy heart tells thee within, that thou hast not sought them at the Lords hands, as thou oughtest, I say to such a man, (and marke it) it were better for him that he should want them: for certainly, when hee hath them, in this manner, he hath them without a blessing; yea; he hath them with a curse, and so had better to be without them, as it had bin better for *Ahab* to have beene without his vineyard, and as it had beene better for *Gehezi*, to have gone without his reward, that hee had of *Naa-*

man

Men that have blessings without prayer, have them uncertainly.

Answ. 2.
Difference betweene having of blessings through the providence of God, and from the love of God.

To have outward things without praier we were better want them.

avail not hold
affirming should
to say, that
the merits even
of justice

ed command
gainedness
regarded to
and signifi-
by of the word
most has, too
to cry out
it is

Ans. 3
Many things
bestowed on
wicked men
for the Churches
good.

Isa. 45. 4.

was the *Assyrian*, for you know he had the lo-
profile with it: it had beene better for the chil-
dren of *Israel* to have gone without their *Quailes*;
for you know the curse that followed, death
went along with them; so when a man shall have
peace and prosperity, and abundance of all things
without seeking them at the *Lords* hands, from
day to day; I say, hee had much better want
them; for there goes death together with them.
It is said plainly, that *ease slayeth the foolish*,
(that is to say) this very prosperity, this thriving,
(notwithstanding a neglecting of prayer, and of
holy duties) I say, it carries death along with it,
as the obtaining of the Vineyard, brought death
to *Athab*, the getting of the Kingdome was the
destruction of *Ieroboam*, and therefore men have
little cause to comfort themselves with this, that
they enjoy many blessings, and never pray for
them.

But, to answer this point more fully, I say,
many blessings are bestowed upon men, not for
their owne sakes, but for the Churches sake. A
man may have strength of body, he may have
great gifts of mind, he may have great successe in
using those gifts, he may bring great enterprizes
to passe, so that you may truly say, the hand of
G o d is with him; all this may be done, not for
his owne sake, but for the sake of the Church, and
glory of G o d some other way, that hee might
doe some service, to this purpose you see, it is
plainely said of *Cyrus*, (*Isaiah* 45. 4.) saith the
Lord there, for *Iacob* my servants sake, and for *Is-*
rael

rael mine elds sake I have called thee by name, and have given thee this great power, and all this great successe, although thou thy selfe have not knowne mee.

(Marke) Cyrus was a most prosperous man, Gods hand was mighty with him, and yet all this was not for his owne sake, but for the Churches sake: so you may thinke it is when men prosper, many times, it is not for their owne sakes, but, to fulfill some other end of Gods providence: and therefore, marke this, and keepe it for a rule; If thou prosperest in thy enterprizes, if thou enjoyest wealth, and peace, and abundance of all things, and art conscious that thou doest not seeke to God, from day to day, that thou keepest not thy heart right and straight, and perfect before him, neither doest call upon him, in an holy and spirituall manner, (certainely it is for one of those causes) thou hast it without a blessing, and with a curse, thou hast it for other ends, and not for good to thy selfe; and therefore thou hast it very uncertainely, it may bee rooke from thee, thou knowest not how soone; yea, and this thou shalt bee sure of, that it shall bee taken from thee then, when of all other times it will bee unfittest for thee: as a theefe comes at a time, when men least looke for him, so destruction comes suddenly upon these men: God cuts them, as a man when hee would have trees to die, he loppes them in that season, that of all others is the unfittest, when the sappe is in the tree, and the lopping will cause them to wither, so the Lord will strike them in a season, that shall be most

Note.

Simile.

Simile.

E

unfit

Answer to the
second part of
the objection.

Ans.
Our prayers
are at times
amiss in one
of these three
respects.

First, in res-
pect of the
principle
whence they
flow, when
they are but
naturall desires.

unfit, most unlookt for. It is quite contrary with the Saints, he cuts them in due season, he lops them in due time, when it is best for them, that they may grow the better for it.

But now for the other part of the objection; it may be, many among you are now ready to say, I have prayed for such and such things, and I have been earnest, and yet the *Lord* hath denied me. My Beloved, if we can satisfy this objection, wee shall then take this impediment away, that wee propound in this objection, which, as I said, hath those two parts. Therefore to this I answer:

First, if thou hast not been heard in thy prayer, consider, whether thou hast not *prayed amiss*; it is a common fault among us, when wee have spent much time in prayer, and it may be, wee have spent time in fasting and prayer, and the thing is not granted; wee presently lay it upon the *Lord*, that hee hath not heard, when many times the cause is in our not praying as wee ought: It may be thou hast been very earnest, and therefore thou hopest thou hast done very well; I tell thee, thou maist be very earnest, and importunate with the *Lord*, when it may be no more but a naturall desire, as when a man hath need to be directed in a difficult case, that much concernes him; when hee hath neede to be extricated, and taken out of such a difficulty, and strait, wherein he is involved; when he hath need of successe in such an enterprize, or any thing of that nature; I say, a man may be earnest with the

Lord

Lord in such a case, and yet his prayer may be amisse, it may not be a spirituall prayer, it may not be an expresseion of holy desires to the Lord; for they onely prevaile with him: and yet I say not, the naturall are excluded, (that is not my meaning) for they may adde winde to the sayles, though holinesse may guide the rudder, and keep the course, and make the sterage, yet naturall desires may make us more importunate, and may adde much to it: therefore, I say, consider thy prayer.

Secondly, Consider againe, when thou hast sought so earnestly to God; whether it be not to bestow it upon thy lusts, as the Apostle speakes, *I am. 4. 3.* when thou hast a businesse to be performed, it may be, thou art earnest with God, but hast thou not an eye to thy owne glory, to thine owne praise and credit in it? when thou wast earnest for health, was it not that thou mightest live more deliciously? when thou desirest wealth, and successe in thine enterprizes, that tend to mend thy state, is it not out of some ambition? you know, that desire is condemned, *If any man will be rich*; is it not a desire of greatnesse? would you not be some body in your place, and set up your house and family? Such things indeed God bestowes upon men, but to have our desires pitched upon them, and to pray for them in that sense, is amisse; and my rule for it is in the first to *Timothy* the sixth chapter, the ninth verse, *If a man will be rich, &c.* that is, when a man desireth excessively more than food and rayment

Naturall desires not excluded in true prayer.

Simile.

Secondly, in respect of the end when they are for the satisfaction of our lusts. *I am. 4. 3.*

2 Tim. 6. 9.

When the naturall affection degenerates into a lust.

Quest.

Ans.
How to know when we pray to bestow things on our lusts.

Simile.

convenient for him, then certainly the naturall affection is degenerate into a lust; for when any affection exceeds, it ceaseth to bee an affection, and begins to be a lust: and therefore where it is said, *If any man will be rich, &c.* it is said after, it is a lust.

But you will say, how shall a man know, when his prayer is to bestow that which he prayeth for upon his lusts?

I answer, If a man consult with his owne heart, and deale impartially with himselfe, hee may know what his ends are; but if you cannot finde it out that way, you may know it by the effect, you may know it by the bills you bring in. What is the expence of the things God hath bestowed on you, when hee hath put a *price into your hands*, consider how you bestow it. If a Steward have a great summe of money, that his Master hath trusted him with, and his bills be, that hee hath bestowed so much in riot, so much in fine apparell, &c. but there hath beene but so much bestowed for his Masters advantage, it is an argument hee hath spent it ill: so when wee see there hath beene so much health spent, so much time, and so much strength, in following our owne plots, and our owne worldly businesse, without respect to God, nor serving God, nor men in our calling, as wee should doe; and that there hath beene little time bestowed in prayer, in reading, in making our hearts perfect with God, in taking paines with them from day to day; I say, if wee thus looke upon the bill of expence,

pence, and consider how we have bestowed our time, our health, our strength, our wits, from day to day, and our discourse (for that is one price that wee have in our hands, by which we may do good; it is as a bucket by which wee may draw from others; and likewise it is as a spring, and fountaine, wherewith wee may feed others, with the waters of life;) consider, how we have laid out all these things, and by that wee may know, how we are disposed to use the blessings wee seeke for at **G O D**'s hands, whether wee seeke them to bestow them upon our lusts, or to spend those gifts to our Masters advantage; and, if wee finde wee doe it for our owne lusts; in this case, I say to you, goe and amend your prayers, and *God* will amend your speeding. We must doe in this case, as an Angler doth when he hath throwne the bait into the river, if it stay long, and catch nothing, hee takes up the bait, and amends it, and when hee sees it well, hee then continues, and waites; in like manner must every one of us doe; if thou pray, and pray long, and hast not obtained the thing thou prayest for, looke diligently to thy prayers, see whether they be right or no; if they be not, amend thy prayers, and **G O D** will amend his readinesse to heare thee; if thou finde they be sincere and hearty, mingled with holy desires, and not with carnall and corrupt affections, then let the bait lye still, that is, continue to pray, and to waite, and the *Lord* will come in due time.

But this is not all, though it be one maine thing,

Simile.

Simile.

2

In respect of
the manner,
when they are
uttered care-
lessly.

What moves
God to doe us
good and evill.

Ans^r. 2
God grants
our prayers oft
times, yet:

First, not in
that manner,
as we desire.

forbesides this, when thou art not heard, consider, if thou hast not prayed remissely, it is a common fault amongst us, when wee succeed not in our prayers, we attribute it to many other things, but not to our remissnesse and carelesnesse in seeking to God; if a man want sleepe, if hee finde sicknesse and weaknesse, and distemper of body, he thinkes that he hath eaten amisse, and considers not whether he hath prayed amisse, if a man have miscarried in his businesse, hee begins to thinke, whether hee hath not been improvident, whether he hath not dealt foolishly, whether hee hath not omitted such and such meanes, as he might have used, he never thinkes whether hee hath prayed amisse or no; when that (perhaps) is the cause of our miscarrying, and not the thing which we commonly attribute it unto: for though God be not the immediate cause, you know hee is the great cause; *There is no ill, that he hath not done*: that which moves him is alway either grace or sinne; as that which moves him to do us good, is our obedience to him; and that which moves him to the contrary, is neglect on our part.

But to answer further; suppose thy prayers bee right, yet this is to bee considered, that oftentimes a man is deceived, in thinking his prayers are not heard; and therefore you must rectifie that misconceit. As for example, sometimes when wee would have the thing in one fashion, God bestowes the same thing upon us in another; and therefore thou maist bee deceived in that; it may be, a man prayes earnestly, that hee

hee may have a strong body, to doe Gods service withall, when as, perhaps sicknesse of body makes him doe him better service, because it keepes him in more awe, it weanes him more from the world, and makes him more heavenly-minded. You know the case of *Paul*, he would faine have had that lust taken away that is spoken of, *2 Cor. 12. 9.* and why? surely the thing he would have had; was, to have his heart in an holy and right frame of grace; now, though *Paul* had not his petition granted that way hee looked for, yet hee had it another way, the *Lord* increased in him the grace of humility by it, hee saw his owne weakenesse, and the power of Christ the more; and when this was discovered unto him, hee was content.

2 Cor. 12. 9.

Is it not all one, whether the *Lord* keeps an enemy from doing us hurt, or that hee gives us a strong helmet or buckler to keepe off the blow, from wounding us? it may bee a man prayes for money, and for estate; if *God* provide him meat and drinke, and cloathes sufficiently, instead of this, is it not all one? It may be another would have a greater degree of conveniency for his dwelling house, and many other things; if *God* give him a body able to endure that which is more course, all is one, as if hee were provided for more delicately. It is all one, whether a Physician quench the thirst of his patient, by giving him beere and drinke that is comfortable unto him, or by giving him barberries, or somewhat else, that will doe the thing as well: and it is e-

Simile.

Simile.

quall to the child whether the Nurse feedes it with milke and other nourishment prepared for it, or gives it the brest which it most desireth: Even so it is all one to thee, whether the Lord answeres thy petition, and gives thee the thing in the very selfe-same manner that thou wouldest have it; or bestowes it in another manner every whit as well, if not better for thee.

2 Not by these
meanes, which
we propound.

Instances.

Secondly, as wee are deceived in the manner, so wee are deceived in the meanes oft times, in seeking to God. When a man prayes, he pitcheth upon such a particular meanes, and thinkes verily that this is the way, or none; yet it may be the Lord will find out another way, that thou diddest never dreame of. *Paul* prayed to have a prosperous journey to *Rome*, hee little thought, that when he was bound at *Ierusalem*, and posted up and downe from one prison to another, God was now sending him to *Rome*; yet he sent him, and sent him very safe with a great company attending upon him, he sent him it may be in a better manner than hee himselfe would have gone, and yet it was by such a meanes as he could never dreame of. Also you know, *Naaman* the *Aff-rian*, he had pitched upon a particular meanes, he thought the Prophet would have surely come forth, and have laid his hands upon him; but to goe and wash in *Jordan*, he thought his labour all lost, and his request which hee made to the Prophet to no purpose; for it was a thing that he never thought of; it was a weake and poore meanes that hee made no account of, yet that was the meanes

meanes that *God* intended : so I say , wee oft deceive our selves , wee pitch upon such particular wayes , and when these faile us , seeing that wee have prayed that these meanes might be used , and *God* doth not use them , wee thinke presently it cannot be effected. *Ioseph* thought verily *Pharaohs* steward should have beene the meanes to bring the promise to passe , & after that , *Pharaohs* butler hee used as a meanes , when he desired him to remember him ; and yet all this was not the meanes , but another , which he never thought of , which was a dreame of *Pharaohs* : the like was in the case of *Mordecai* , deliverance came a strange way , a way that *Mordecai* never imagined. So *Abraham* thought verily that *Ismael* had beene the sonne of the promise , but *God* tells him hee was deceived , *Isaac* was the sonne , in whom he would make good the promise. So the *Israelites* thought that *Moses* should have delivered them , that it should have beene presently true , that the yoke of bondage should have immediatly beene taken off from them ; but wee see *God* went another way to worke , hee sent *Moses* away into a farre Country , and the bondage was exceedingly increased upon them ; so that they thought they were further off now than ever they were before , but in truth , they were nearer : for the increase of the bondage , increased *Pharaohs* sinne , and made him ripe for destruction : Again , it increased the peoples humility , it made them to pray harder , and to cry more fervently to *God* for deliverance , and so it made them more fit for it ;
and

Wee attribute
too much to
meanes.

and *Moses* at the last was more fitted to bee a deliverer after he was so long trained up, and was so much humbled; so that when *G o d* seemes to us to goe a cleane contrary way, yet it is his next way to bring it to passe. *Beloved*, it is a common thing with us, wee pitch upon a certaine particular meanes, wee thinke such a man must doe it, or such a course must doe it, when the *Lord* intends nothing lesse. And the reason often is, because if wee should have deliverance, many times by such meanes, by such men, and by such wayes, wee would attribute too much to the meanes. Therefore, wee see, while *Gideon* had a great army the *Lord* would not doe it, it was too great for him; and therefore wee see to whar a small number hee brought it: so oft-times men thinke, oh if I had such a mans helpe, or if I had such a meanes, it would doe the thing, the enterprise would be brought to passe: when wee make too much account of it, the *Lord* (it may be) casts away that, which seemed most probable; and (even as he doth most of his workes, as he builds his owne Kingdome by the most foolish and improbable meanes of all other, so) often hee doth our businesse by such meanes, that wee least dreame of: therefore be not discouraged. Suppose we pray, that such a great Prince should raise the Churches, that such a warre, that such an enterprise, and project may doe it; put the case the *Lord* will not doe it so, are we then presently undone? and is there no helpe, because such a

battaile

battaile is overthrowne, because such a King did not succeed, because such a Generall had not successe, according to our expectation? It may be that is not the way, the *Lord* will helpe the Church after another manner, than wee dreame of; and so for a mans selfe, hee hath a great businesse to be done, or hee is in distresse, and would have deliverance; and hee thinkes this is the way, or none; and therefore hee is earnest to have it done: now it is good, in this case, to leave it to the *Lord*, to make our requests knowne to him; and when we have done that, to be no further carefull, but leave it to the *Lord*, to doe it his owne way; for hee is most skilfull.

If you take a skilfull workeman, and say no more to him but thus: Sir, I pray you, doe mee such a thing, if it were the bringing of water, or the setting up of a building, it may be, he will goe a way to worke, that thou knowest not what it meanes, and yet thou wilt trust him: why then wilt thou not trust *God*, and suffer him to goe his owne way? for when thou art crossed in that thing, wherein (it may bee) of all others, thou wouldest not be crossed, perhaps that same is the best way of all other, to bring the thing to passe that thou desirest.

Thirdly, as wee are deceived in the manner, and the meanes, so likewise wee mistake the time: it may bee the *Lord* is willing to doe the thing, but not in that time that thou wouldest have him. When a man prayes to bee delivered

Simile.

Thirdly, or not
in our time.

Simile.

¶ We must not
take Gods de-
layes for de-
nials.

Note.

¶ Why God de-
ferres to an-
swer us.

Note.

vered from such trouble, from such a distresse
and affliction, hee thinks the time very long,
and saith, hee is not heard, because hee is not
delivered presently: wee would all have the
smarting plaister presently tooke off; but the
LORD is wiser than wee, (as the Physitian
knowes what belongs to the Patient better
than himselfe) though hee doe it not pre-
sently, yet hee will doe it in his good time.
Therefore say not, thou art not heard, thou
must take heed of taking delayes for denials,
the Lord will deferre to doe the thing, yet hee
will doe it, and doe it in the best season: for this
is a generall rule, *Gods time is the best time.*
When thou comest to pray for a thing, thou
wouldest have it done presently, and thou
thinkest it is the best time, all the controver-
sie betweene GOD, and thee is, which is the
fittest time to have it done, thou thinkest per-
haps presently; God againe (it may bee) will doe
it a yeare hence; surely hee is the best chooser,
and wee shall finde it so; and therefore be con-
tent to waite his leasure: For he may have many
ends in deferring it, it may be to try thy faith,
(as hee did the faith of the *Canaanite*, whom
therefore hee would not heare,) it may bee to in-
crease thy holinesse, to put thy heart into a better
temper, and therefore hee desorres longer. Hee
meant to doe that for *Iacob*, that hee did, yet hee
suffered *Iacob* to wraastle *all night*, and yet
he would not doe it till the instant of the mor-
ning appeared: so it was with *Daniel*, the an-
swer

swer went forth when hee began to pray, yet hee would have him instant, and continue in prayer; so (I say) the Lord may have many ends why hee deferrēs, let us therefore be content to take his owne time.

Last of all, consider this when thou seekest to the Lord; to have any thing done, it is possible that it may crosse some other passage of his providence; and in this case thou shouldest be content to be denied.

But, you will say, why may not both be accommodated?

I answer, so they shall, though thou see not how; for it is not with God as it is with man: if a man doe a good turne to one, two being earnest petitioners whose well-being wholly depends on the successe, hee must needes doe an ill turne to another; but God composeth all for the best. As for example, David desired exceedingly to build a Temple; yet the Lord had another end, for hee had resolved in his providence to make Salomon the builder of it, which indeed was much better for David: for what more than hee had could David have gotten, if he had done it? seeing the Lord gave him as full a reward, as if he had done it: for he tells him, that for that purpose of building God an house, he would build him an house: so that David had his end to the full, though Salomon did build the Temple. In like manner in the land of Canaan amongst the Israelites the Lord kept the Canaanites but it was for their profit to exercise them, and keep them in feare,

Answ. 3.
Our prayers may crosse some passage of Gods providence.

Object.

Answ.

Simile.

fear, lest at any time they should forget him. So
also wee finde by experience, there are some pas-
sages of G o d s providence, that if wee knew,
wee would willingly yeeld to, in that it
were better, that it should bee so, than
otherwise; and therefore it is better,
in some case, that wee
should be denied.

FINIS.



THE



THE THIRD SERMON.

1 THESS. 5. 17.

Pray continually.



Ow wee proceede to that which remains, for something more we may adde to the demonstrating the time of Gods granting our petitions, and the measure of satisfying them, which wee touched a little before.

For the time; wee are deceived in that wee thinke, when God deferres he denies; for many times God deferres for speciall reasons, and yet he grants the requests, in the fittest time for us, as the Physitian knoweth the fittest time to give the patient physicke or one kinde of another; and in this

See page. 59.

Simile.

simile.

Rev. 2. 10.

Note.

Four reasons
of Gods defer-
ring to grant
our requests

I
To try our
faith,

To humble us
more.

this wee must yeeld to God; as hee doth all his
workes in the fittest time, so hee grants our pe-
titions in the fittest time; there is an appointed
time for any deliverance to be granted, for any
blessing, for any comfort that wee neede, and ex-
pect from his hands. Now, if our selves did right-
ly see it, wee would have things done for us in
the most inconvenient time, wee would have the
smarting plaister pulled off, before the wound be
healed, whereas it is best for us to have it kept
on: Beloved, you shall finde, that God divides be-
tweene *Sathan* and us, in this case, as we see Rev.
2. 10. *Sathan shall cast some of you into prison, and
you shall be there for ten dayes*: it was not so long
as *Sathan* would have had it, it may be, he would
have had it ten and ten too; nor againe, it was
not so short as God would have had it, but God
sets downe the time betweene them both: and
therefore we must rest upon him, and thinke that
many times there is great reason, why we should
be deferred, when wee aske things at his hands.
Now you shall finde God defers for one of these
causes, for the most part:

Sometimes, for the tryall of our faith, as wee
see, he deferred to grant to the woman of *Canaan*,
although he did meane to grant her request, yet
hee deferred long, that hee might put her to the
tryall; and you see, shee was no loser by it, but
when she held out in her prayers, she had her re-
quest granted to the full.

Sometimes, hee defers to grant it, that wee
may be more humbled; as you know, *Paul* prayed
earnestly

earnestly, but God told him, that hee would deferre him, because he needed more humility: so hee deferred to grant the request, that the men of Israel put up to him against Benjamin, when the cause was just, and God intended to helpe them, yet they fell before their enemies twice, though they fasted and prayed; his end was, as we see in the Text, that they might be more humbled, that their hearts might be more broken, that they might be more fitted to receive it.

Againe, sometimes God defers, that we might be more able to use those blessings that he meanes to bestow upon us: so he deferred to raise Joseph to preferment; so he deferred to bring David to the Kingdome, that those afflictions that they endured might the better fit them to enjoy so great prosperity, as he had provided for them afterwards.

And lastly, he defers, that hee might set a higher price upon his blessings; that hee might inhaunce the price of them; as the fisher drawes away the bait, that the fish might follow it the more: so God withholds blessings, that wee might have a greater edge set upon our desires, that wee might pray harder for them, that wee might prize them more, when wee have obtained them.

Now, as hee doth thus for the time, and as we are often deceived in the time, in taking delayes for denials; so likewise wee are often deceived in the measure: many times God grants the things that wee would have, but because wee

F

have

3

To enable us
to use his blessings
when we
have them.

4

To make us to
prize his blessings.

Simile.

Concerning
the measure, if
God give us
not so much as
we aske.

have not so large a measure as we expect; therefore wee thinke we have it not at all, and that the Lord hath denied us our prayers, when indeed hee hath not; for a lesser measure, many times, may serve as well as a greater: as G^d saith to Paul, *My grace is sufficient for thee*. Though the temptation doe abide upon us, if there be sufficient grace to keepe us in a continuall conflict, and warre against it, if there be sufficient grace to obtaine pardon, to uphold, and to comfort us in it, it is enough, it may bring us to heaven; wee have a deliverance from it, even when we seeme not to be delivered; though wee have not so full a victory, as we would have, yet that grace may be sufficient.

You shall see this almost in all the things wee have occasion to request at G^ds hands; that a lesser measure may serve as well as a greater. Take it first in outward things.

A little wealth may serve as well as great revenues, as in *Psal. 37. 16. A little that the righteous hath is better than the great revenues of the wicked*: because a little, when G^d shall fill it with his blessings, it shall serve the turne as well; but, if a man hath great revenues, and G^d blowes upon them, and leaves an emptinesse in them; if a man have great revenues, if hee have great outward comforts, yet if there be an emptinesse, if there be a vanity in them, if they be as the huske without the graine, as the shell without the kernell, as they are often; though there bee a great bulke, and they seeme very fit to comfort us; yet they will

A lesse measure may serve as well as a greater. Cleared in instances.

1. Wealth
Psal. 37. 16.

Simile.

will doe us little good; whereas a little, on the other side, with Gods blessing, will doe much good: for in this case it is as was with *Manna*, Those that had little, had sufficient, and those that gathered over, had never a whit the more; that is, for their use and comfort. You know, the little that *Daniel* had, it nourished and strengthened him, as much as the great portion of the Kings meat, that others had; and therefore a little, in this kinde, may serve as well as much.

And so likewise, a little grace may be so used, and improved, that it may enable you to doe much, it may preserve you from sinning against God; as well as a great measure. For the confirmation of this looke to *Rev. 3. 8.* which is a notable place for this purpose: it is said there to the Church of *Philadelphia*, *Thou hast a little strength*, they had but a little strength, and yet you see there what that little strength did: *Thou hast but a little strength, and yet thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name*: There were but two things for them to doe, to keepe his word, and to be kept from running out to the deniall of his name, and committing other sins: now the little strength they had, was sufficient for these ends. So that we see, he findes no fault with that Church; other Churches, that had more strength, it may be, they fell into greater sinnes. But this is a rule which is true, you will finde it true in all observations through the Scriptures, That sometimes those that have great grace, notwithstanding fall into great sinnes, they may bee subje&t to some

2 Instance, in grace.

Rev. 3. 8.

Those that have more grace may fall, when weak ones stand.

strong prevailing lust; as *David*, you know, had a great grace, and yet, we see, he was subject to great sinnes together with it.

And againe, a man may have but a little grace, and yet that little grace may be so ordered, and husbanded, and improved, that that little grace may keepe him from sinne, more than the other. This must bee warily understood, not but that great grace enables a man to doe greater workes than the other, it enables a man, in the ordinary course, to resist greater temptations, more than lesse grace; but yet, (I say for our comfort, that) though a man have but a little strength, as it is said in the place newly mentioned, *Rev. 3.* in that little strength, *I have set a doore open to thee*; it opened the doore of heaven wide enough, so that no man could shut it.

Note in what
sense this is to
be taken.

Rev. 3.

3 Instance in
gifts.

Simile.

And as we say of grace, so likewise for gifts; smaller gifts, meaner gifts may serve the turne many times, as well as greater gifts: for (you know) a little finger, a small hand may serve to thread a needle, as well as a greater, and (it may be) will doe it better; for in the Church there are varieties of operations, and variety of functions, and meaner gifts may serve for the discharge of some operations, of some services for the Church as well as greater. And therefore, as there are variety of functions, so there are variety of members, some stronger, some weaker and the weaker may serve, in some cases, as well as the stronger; a little Barke may doe better in a small river, than a greater shippe; so a man that hath

Simile.

hath but meane gifts, may serve meane capacities, as well as greater and better: and therefore thinke not that things are denied, when the thing is granted, not in such a measure as wee desire. Lastly, to be faithfull in a little gift will bring as great a reward, as to be faithfull in greater. *Thou hast beene faithfull in little, may make a man ruler over much,* &c. may bring a great increase of the talents after: Therefore let not a man be discouraged, if he have not so great a measure as others have.

So likewise if a man desire patience & strength, to goe through all variety of conditions, through all the troubles he meets with: as sometimes the Lord layes a great burthen upon a mans shoulders, and gives him great strength to beate it; sometimes againe hee gives but a little strength, and then hee proportions the burthen to it; for is it not all one, whether the burthen be great, and the strength answerable, or the burthen be lesse, and the strength little? Sometimes hee takes away calamity quite, sometimes he layes it upon a man, and gives him as much strength as enables him to beare it, and that is as good as if it were removed; else, what is the meaning of that, *you shall have an hundred fold with persecution*, but that you shall have so much joy and strength in persecution, that it shall be all one as if you wanted it? So wee see *Heb. 5. 7.* when Christ prayed for deliverance, in that great houre of triall, the Text saith, *Hee was heard in the things hee feared;* and yet, we see, the cup did not passe from him, but only hee was strengthened to beare it,

Faithfulness in little brings as great a reward as in more.

4 Instance, in crosses and afflictions.

Simile.

Heb. 5. 7.

Note.

and so it is in this case. All which may serve for a full answer to that, that wee be not mistaken in judging our prayers not to be heard, when they are heard.

And now, *Beloved*, what remaines but that wee set our selves to the duty, to doe that wee are exhorted unto heere, namely to *Pray continually*, that is, to pray very much, to keepe at least a constant course in it, for first, if we doe neglect it, we doe but robbe God of his mercies, we take them without his leave.

Again, we are guilty of the sinne of unthankfulness: for we ought to *give thanks in all things*.

Besides, we neglect his worship; for you know prayer is a part of his worship, and the neglect of it from day to day, or at any time, when we omit it, is a neglect of that worship and service we owe unto him.

And moreover, wee do not only suffer sinne to lye unforgiven, which is very dangerous, but also wee deprive our selves of blessings, and bring a curse upon us; nay wee suffer our hearts to grow hard, and to be dis tempered: for from our neglect of prayer comes that deadnesse of spirit, that worldly mindednesse, and unaptnesse to pray, to heare the word, and to keep the Sabbath: for what else is the reason, why those that have beene forward and zealous professors, in former times, have lost their light, and fallen from their place; I say, what is the reason of it; when they were sometimes *servant in spirit serving the Lord* but because that fire was not kept alive with the fuel of prayer.

Dangers of omitting, or neglecting prayer.

1

2

3

4

5

6

Why men decline in their grace.

er; and when they declined from that pitch, from that degree of faith, which they had obtained, you shall find that it did commonly arise from remissnesse in this duty. Therefore we say to such, *Repent, and amend, and doe your first workes;* that is, use your former diligence, renew that, and that will renew grace and strength againe: therefore take heed of being negligent, and remisse in this duty. Wee have great cause to be encouraged to it, for there is not a faithfull prayer that wee make shalbe lost, but they come up into remembrance. And therefore you must consider with your selves, not onely what you doe for the present, but what stocke of prayers you have laid up. You know, a man may have much in bills and bonds, as well as in present money; so there is a certaine stocke of prayer, a certaine treasure laid up, that shall not be forgotten. The husbandman lookes not onely upon the graine that he hath in his garner, but hee lookes upon that which is sowne, though it be out of his hand, yea, he reckons that the better of the two; so thole prayers that have beene sowne, (it may be, many yeares agoe) are such as will bring in a sure increase. Therefore let us be exhorted to be constant in this duty, to be frequent therein, to continue in it, watching thereto with perseverance.

And now wee have dispatched this wee will come to answer some cases of conscience that fall out in the performance of this duty, which are divers:

First, this is one; What shall a man judge of his

Benefit of frequency, and diligence in prayer.

No faithfull prayer is lost.

Simile.

Simile.

Nine cases of conscience concerning prayer.

Case 1.

About wandring thoughts
in a prayer.

Answ.

I
The cause of
them is weak-
nesse.

Simile.

Simile.

Simile.

his prayers; when they are accompanied with wandring thoughts; whether those prayers are such as God wholly refuseth, or what he is to doe in such a case; when he is subject to wandring thoughts, to vanity of minde, and distemper in the performance of that duty?

To this I answere, that wee must distinguish of the cause whence these wandring thoughts arise.

Sometimes they arise, not so much from our owne neglect, as from weaknesse, from temptation; and in such a case God layes them not so much to our charge. As for example, one that aymes at a marke, and doth his best to hit the marke, yet, if he hath a hand, or an arme, that hath the palsey in it, or if one jogge him while he is about it, the fault was not so much in him, it was not want of good will to doe it, nor want of diligence; but either it is his weaknesse, or it is an impediment cast in by another: so it is in this case, this wandring of minde proceeds from a naturall infirmity and imbecility that hangs upon the nature of man, which is not so able to keep it selfe close to such a spirituall businesse: and this God considers, for he is wise, and knows that we are but flesh: When a weake servant goes about a businesse, though hee doe it not so well as a stronger, yet a man is wise to consider, that the servant is but weake: in like manner the Lord considers the naturall weaknesse that wee are subject unto, and he deales mercifully with us, in such a case for herein a man is as one that hath a bow in his

his hand, but he hath a palsey-arme, and therefore he cannot keep it steddy, though he have a mind to doe it.

So also in the other case is, when he is jogged in his shooting by another, that is, when Satan interrupts him, who is alwaies diligent to hinder him in such a duty; in this case, God chargeth it not upon him, neither doth he cast us off, nor reject our prayers because of that.

But on the other side, when this wandring of mind shal rise from meer negligence on our part, from profanenesse, from want of reverence, because we do not intend holy duties as we ought, we come not to them with that cōscionablenesse, with that carefulnesse as wee should doe; in this case it is a great sinne, and this moves the Lord to anger, when wee performe the duty in that manner, when wee doe not so much as set our selves about it with our strength, but suffer our mindes to wander without any resistance.

Or secondly, when wee our selves be the cause of it, by admitting of loose thoughts, by suffering our selves to be worldly minded, by suffering an indisposition to grow upon us, and not labouring to resist it, and cast it off againe. You know, when an instrument is out of tune, if the lesson be never so good that is played upon it, yet it is unpleasant, because the instrument is out of tune; and whose fault is that? So, when thou comest to God, and sufferest thy heart to be disordered before, and doest not looke to keepe it in order, that is thy sin, as well as thy profanenesse and

2. Temptation.

3. Negligence.

4. Voluntary admitting of vaine thoughts

Simile,

and neglect in the very time of the performance.

And by this you may learne, how to judge of wandring thoughts in the performance of this duty, & likewise you may see how to prevent them. The way to prevent them, is first, to keepe our hearts in tune before, to have them ready, as *the wise man hath his heart at his right hand*; that is, he hath it ready when he hath it to use. When a man is to use his horse, he doth not suffer him to runne up and downe in the pastures wildely, but will have him under bridle; so wee should keepe our hearts in frame, that they may be ready to do us service in such an holy duty, when we have need of them.

Secondly, we must be diligent, when we come to performe the duty, that though our minds do wander, yet we may be ready to recall them presently, to set our selves to it with all diligence. So much for answering of this first case.

The second Case is, what a man is to do, when hee findes a great indisposition to prayer, such a dulnesse and deadnesse in him, that hee knowes not how to goe about the duty, and he thinks, if he do it, it were as good be undone.

To this I answer briefly, that in all such cases, a man is bound notwithstanding to performe it, let his heart be never so much out of temper, let there be never so great a dulnesse, and deadnesse of spirit upon him, yet he is bound to doe it.

But you will say, Why, but I am altogether unfit.

I answer, That a man by setting himselfe upon the

How to prevent wandring thoughts in prayer.

Simile.

Case 2.
About indisposition, sednesse, and dulnesse, and unaptnesse to prayer.

Answer. I.

Object.

Answer.

the worke shall gather a fitnessse, though he were unfit at the first. You know, members that are benumbed, yet by using them, they get life and heat, and come, in the end, to be nimble enough; so it is with the heart, in this case, when it is benumbed, the very using of it makes it fit for the duty. You know, wood, though it be Greene, yet, if it be long blowed, at the length it will be dry, and take fire; so it is with the heart, a man may be long about getting it on the wing, yet with much adoe hee may do it; and therefore he ought to doe this duty in such a case; yea, so much the rather, because there is never more need of calling upon God, than at such a time: for then a man lyes most exposed to temptation, then, if any sinne come, he is ready to be overtaken with it, hee is unfit for anything: and therefore, if ever he have need to call upon God, it is at that time.

But you will say, It may be God will not accept it.

I answer briefly, Although a mans heart be so indisposed, that when he hath done all he can, yet hee can get no life, hee can get no heat in the performance of such a duty, yet God may accept that prayer, as well as that which is most fervent. And that you may understand this aright, you must take it with this distinction: for alwayes this dullnesse and deadnesse in prayer, comes from one of these two causes:

One is, when God withdrawes his owne spirit, that is, withdrawes not his spirit altogether; (for there may be an helpe, when we perceive it not,

Simile.

Simile.

Never more need to pray, than when we are most indisposed.

Note.

Object.

Answ.

Causes of dullnesse.

1 Distraction.

From negli-
gence.

When indispo-
sition is no
hinderance.

Case 3.
About praying
after a man
hath commit-
ted some grosse
sinne.

not) but when he withdrawes the livelineffe, and quicknesse of his spirit, and in this case, if we doe our duty, if wee doe the best wee can, the Lord doth accept it, though hee hath not vouchsafed such enlargement of our hearts, though he hath not powred out his spirit upon us, in the performance of the duty, as at other times but the gives a secret helpe, that perhaps we feele not, nor peradventure is so great as at other times, yet I say, when it ariseth from his own withdrawing of that fitnesse, and wee our selves are not negligent (which is the other cause) but endeavour as much as we can to doe our best, in this case *God accepteth the will for the deed*, as I have often said to you that rule alway holds good, when the impediment is such as we cannot remove, when the dulnesse of spirit is such as it is not in our power to remove it, though we have used our utmost diligence, in that case it is no hinderance. And therefore it is a great comfort unto us that we have used our diligence in this duty, and have imployed our best strength to quicken our hearts, though it be not done, yet God accepts our prayers, as well as if they were performed in a more lively and fervent manner.

The next case is, what a man is to doe after he hath committed some great sinne, after he hath wounded his conscience, whether then, notwithstanding hee must come, and keepe his constant course in praying, morning and evening, whether he shall be so bold, as to come into Gods presence, after he hath so exceedingly offended him.

To

To this I answer, that a man is bound (notwithstanding any sinne that he hath committed, be it what it will bee,) to keepe this course constantly in prayer, and not to omit it, nor to keepe off, nor to deferre it. And my ground for it is, because this is a duty, it is a charge that God hath laid upon all, to *Pray continually*; that is, at the least twice a day, as we shewed before, to keepe a constant course in it. Now it is certaine, our failing in one thing must not excuse us in another: when the duty lyes on us, wee have no dispensation to bee negligent in it; and therefore wee are bound to do it.

Againe, consider this, that a particular offence doth not offend so much, as if we grow strangers to God, as if wee grow to a generall rebellion against him. As, put the case, a childe commits a great offence against his father, yet, if he runne away from his fathers house, and grow a stranger to him, that is more than the particular offence: for a generall rebellion must needs be more than the particular. And to give over calling upon God, to breake off that course, to grow a stranger to him, to runne away from his house, and (as it were) to be ready to give over all his ordinances, and a constant course of obedience to him; this is a generall rebellion, and is worse than the particular; yea such a carriage, after sinne committed, moves God to anger more than the sinne it selfe: as many times, the contemptuous, negligent, rebellious carriage, after an offence, moves a master, a husband, or a parent more than the particular

In this case, prayer is not to be neglected.

Reason 1.

It is Gods command.

Note.

Reason 2.

Neglect in this is worse than the sinne committed before.

Reason 3

It leaves the
breach in the
conscience
open.

culat failing though it were exceeding great.

Besides, consider when a man commits a great sinne, he makes a great gappe in his conscience, he makes a great breach there, and will you have that breach lye open? is not that very dangerous? is not that the way to bring in more sinne, and to suffer those good things that that are in the heart to steale out? I will give you but one instance for this: You see, *S. Peter*, when he had committed a great sinne, in denying his Master, and forswearing of him too, yet, because hee came in presently, and repented, and sought for pardon, (as you know he did,) he was graciously preserved from running into further arrerages; for hee made up the gappe, hee made up the breach by his true repentance.

If wee recover
not quickly
out of a sinne,
wee adde more
to it.

Wee see, on the other side, when *David* had committed that sinne with *Bathsheba*, and did not come unto *God*, as he should have done, to keepe his ordinary course in sacrificing unto him, in repenting, and renewing his repentance, and praying to him, you know, how many sinnes hee fell into. And likewise that was the case of *Salomon*, you know, to what a height he grew, by not coming to *God*, at his first failing: And therefore, I say, there is reason, that we should do it, though the sinne be never so great we ought to come in, and to keepe our course constantly.

Quest.

But may I not stay till I bee more fitted, till my heart bee more softened, and more humbled?

Answe.

Beloved, to stay in this case is dangerous, for the

the heart commonly growes more hard in sin by continuance; the conscience is more tender immediately after the sinne is committed, than it is afterwards; and when thou stayest for more humility thou findest lesse: And therefore, while the wound is greene, and when the fire hath taken newly hold, it is then best to quench it, before the wound be festered, before it hath continued long; for the heart will grow worse and worse, as it is *Heb. 3. 12.* Take heed that you be not hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne: The meaning is this, when you commit a sinne, you thinke; if you stay a weeke, or a fortnight, or a moneth, you shall come in as well as at the first; no, saith the Apostle; while it is so day come in, that is, do it presently, for sinne will deceive you, it will harden your heart before you be aware, it will make a distance between God and you, it will take you off from him; it will leade you further on: and therefore take heed, that your hearts bee not hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne, that sinne doe not deceive you, which it will doe it before you thinke of it. And therefore in this case you should doe as you do with waters, when waters breake out a little, it is best to stop them presently, if you suffer them, they will make the breach greater, till at length you bee unable to stop them; so in this case, when you have committed a great sin, come in speedily, before the wound grow incurable.

But you will say, What, shall a man come into Gods presence, who is most holy, after he hath defiled

Staying for finnes after sinne committed, we become more unfit.

Heb. 3. 12.

Simile.

Object.

Answ.

We must come
to God with a
disposition
turned from
sinne.

filed himselfe with some great sinne; is not this an unreverent thing?

I answer briefly, it is very true, if thou be bold to come into *Gods* presence with the same disposition wherewith the sinne was committed, with a minde so fashioned, and so framed, in that case thou doest exceedingly provoke him, this is a very high degree of profanenesse: and therefore, when wee say, thou must come in, and keepe a constant course in prayer notwithstanding, the meaning is, you must come in with a disposition turned aside from your sins, and brought home to *God*, with a minde to abhorre that which is evil, and to cleave to that which is good, there must bee this conversion of the minde to him, thou must not come in with the same disposition, that must be altered. So much shall serve for the answer to this case.

Case 4.

About a set
forme of
prayer.

Answ.

Another case is, whether wee may use a set forme of prayer, and likewise whether it be sufficient?

I need not say much to you, for I thinke there is none here that doubt of it, but that a set forme of prayer may be used: you know, *Christ* prescribed a forme, you know, there were certaine *Psalmes* that were prayers, that were used constantly, and therefore there is no doubt but that a set forme may be used, for we have those and other examples for it: And in the Church, at all times, both in the primitive times, and all along to the beginning of the reformed times, to *Luther* and *Calvins* time, still in all times the Church had

had set formes they used, and I know no objection against it of weight. One maine objection is this:

That in stinted prayer the spirit is straitned, when a man is tyed to a forme, then hee shall have his spirit (as it were) bounded and limited, that he cannot goe beyond that which is prescribed; and therefore, say they, it is reason a man should be left to more libertie, (as hee is in conceived prayers,) and not tyed to a strict forme.

To this I answer, even those men that are against this, and that use this reason, they doe the same thing daily in the congregation: for when another prayes, that is a set forme to him that heares it: I say, it is a forme to him; for put the case, that he which is an hearer, and doth attend another praying, suppose that his spirit bee more enlarged, it is a straitning to him, hee hath no liberty to goe out, he is bound to keepe his minde intent upon that which the other prayeth: And therefore, if that were a sufficient reason; that a man might not use a set forme, because the spirit is straitned, a man should not heare another pray (though it be a conceived prayer) because, in that case, his spirit is limited; it may bee, the hearer hath a larger heart (a great deale) than hee that speakes and praies: so that there is a bounding, & straitning, and a limiting of the spirit to him. And therefore that reason cannot be good.

Againe, I answer, though the spirit be limited, at that time in publike, yet he hath a liberty at o-

G

ther

Object.

Ans. 1.
They that object against a set forme of prayer, do the same thing.

Note.

Ans. 2.
VVe have liberty at other times.

ther times, to pray as freely as he will in private; and therefore he is not so tied, but though at that time in the congregation he be, yet it is no generall tye; at another time, or immediatly after, he may be as free as he will in secret.

Ans. 3.
The spirit is
not restrained
in a set forme
of prayer.

Againe, I answer, it is not a bound, or restraint of the spirit, because there is a tye of words; for the largenesse of the heart stands not so much in the multitude and variety of expressions, as in the extent of the affection: now then the heart may be very large, for all that; though he be tyed in words, yet there is not a tye upon the affection, that may be extended more, in putting up the same petition, when another mans is more strained: therefore there is no tye, and limit upon that. And this is enough to satisfie that case, that a set forme of prayer must be used.

Quest.
Though a set
forme may be
used in prayer,
yet that alone
is not suffici-
ent.

But now, if you aske, whether that be sufficient? whether a man may thinke, if he have been present at publike Prayer, (which is a commendable and religious thing to use constantly) I say, whether that be sufficient?

Ans.

My Beloved, this is a matter of some moment, to consider what wee ought to doe in this case, for we may be deceived in it, and I answer plainly. It is not sufficient: A man that is diligent in publike prayers, that keepes them morning and evening, if hee thinkes now hee hath discharged his duty, he is in a very great error: and this is the reason, because they are not sufficient. Indeed; they ought to be used constantly, for God is worshipped in the; & it is a more divine worship, for
when

when God is honoured before many (as a man, when there are many spectators, more honour is done to him) it is a greater honour, which is when men joyne in this worship. Many other reasons might be produced for it, but that is not the thing, I am now upon, to commend it to you; but I say, it is not sufficient, although it ought to be done, because there are many particular sinnes, which cannot be confessed in publike prayer, there are many particular wants, which in publike prayer you cannot unfold, and open, or expresse unto the Lord.

Againe, the end of a set forme of prayer is to be an helpe for the private, (for the publike it is another case) a helpe that one may use that is yet exceeding weake: a child, that cannot goe, may have a prop to helpe it, but wee must not alway be children, we must not alway use that helpe.

Besides, we must consider this, that there is no man that hath any worke of grace in his heart, but he is enabled in some measure to pray, without a set forme of prayer, he is able to expresse his desires to God in private, one way or other: There was never any man in any extreame want, but he knew how to expresse himselfe, where he had liberty to speake, so it is in this case.

Besides, the spirit of a man hath greater liberty in private; there a man may powre forth his soule to the Lord, as Hanna saith, 1 Sam. 1. which in publike hee cannot doe freely: there are many particular mercies, which hee hath cause to be chankfull to God for.

Simile.

5 Reasons proving that a set forme of prayer is not sufficient.

Reason 1.

Reason 2.

Simile.

Reason 3.

Reason 4.

1 Sam. 1.

Reason 5.

The end why
prayer is used.

Besides, there is a particular paines that a man is to take with his heart, from day to day, which in the publike common petitions, hee is not able to doe: for, *Beloved*, know this, that the prayer which is required from day to day, is not so much the performance of the duty, the doing of the taske, but the end is to keep the heart in order; for if sinfull lusts grow upon it, and distempers, and worldly mindednesse, the end of this duty is to worke them out againe, to renew repentance againe; and when there is a forgetfulnesse of the covenant, when grace growes weake, when good desires begin to languish, to renew, and recover them, to put fuel to them: and this is not done by the performance of the publike onely. And therefore, I say, though you performe it in your families, and meet in the Congregation, you must not thinke that this is enough, for you are bound to a private performance of this duty.

Case 5.

About using
the voice, and
about the ge-
sture in secret
prayer.

Againe, this is another Case, what a man is to doe in the private performance of this duty, whether he be bound alwayes to use his voice? whether hee be bound alwayes to such a kinde of gesture?

Answ.

I answer this briefly, (for there is no great difficulty in these things, and therefore I passe them over) for the gesture in publike, there is more heed to be taken of that, because it is a publike and open worship of God, and therefore in publike the gesture is alway to be reverent. You know how often it is repeated, (in the Old Te-

stament

stament especially) that they bowed downe, and worshipped, and so Christ looked up to heaven, Paul kneeled downe, and the rest with him, and prayed, and many such like expressions you have mentioned in the Scriptures; where you have prayer mentioned in publike, still you shall finde an expression of some reverent gesture; therefore when we appeare before the Lord in the publike performance of this duty, especiall care must bee taken hereunto. In the private, the case is different, there variety of gestures may be used, and I do not see but all manner of gestures may be used; there are many examples for walking, and lying, and sitting; onely this is to be taken heed to, that even in private, as farre as may be, the gesture be such, as may both expresse the inward reverence in the heart, for else of the outward man, I see not but there is a liberty in that, And indeed I thinke this is the best rule in private, that that gesture be used, that doth most quicken, & doth help the duty most. Some gesture may bring a dulnesse, and indisposition, when another may quicken the body, & make it more fit for prayer: sometimes lying is inconvenient, and sometimes more convenient: And therefore, in this case, the best rule is to use that gesture, which quickens most, which helps most the duty. Some gestures may breed a wearinesse in the body, some may breed a dulnesse; some are painefull to the body: all this is a hindrance to the duty, when as the change of it may quicken and helpe it forward.

Now for the voice, I say, for that, (as for the gesture)

Note.

That gesture is to be used in private prayer that doth most quicken,

Iohn 4. 24.

Angels how
they speake to
God, and one
another.

Iames 3. 9.

Why the voice
is used in
prayer.

gesture) it is not simply required: for *God is a spirit, and he will be worshipped in spirit*. Men that have cares, and bodies, they must have men speake to them: but *God*, that is a spirit, delights in that which is like himselfe; and therefore all his eye is upon the inward behaviour of the spirit. Besides the spirit may speake to *God*, when the voice doth not; as, you know, the *Angels* speake to *God*, and they speake one to another. The Schoolemen have great disputes about the speech of *Angels*, but this they agree in, that one *Angel* speakes to another after this manner: When any one hath a conceit in his mind of any thing, with a will that another should understand it, & that *God* should understand it, that is enough for the expresseion of it; so is it with the spirit of a man, when hee hath such a petition in his heart, in his minde, and there is a desire in his will, that *God* should understand that petition, that is an offering it up to the *Lord*; it is as true a speaking to the *Lord*; as when you deliver it by an outward voice, for the spirit agrees with the *Angels*, so farre as it is a spirit, and as they speake one to another, and to the *Lord*, so doth the spirit of man; though indeed the tongue be to be used, as it is said *Iam. 3. 9. Therewith blesse we God*, and therewith should we pray among others, and before others, and speake before others; but when there is any cause to use the voice in private, it is this, as farre as it may quicken the heart, (as I said of gesture) and as farre as thereby wee may keepe our thoughts from wandring. If the voice were not used, perhaps,

haps, the thoughts would bee subject to more wandering, and wee should not be ready to take notice of them, but they would slip before wee are aware; and therefore when the voice is used it must bee so keepe in the thoughts.

In some cases, to omit the voice is more convenient, when it may draw any other inconveniency; but that is left to every mans particular case, as he shall finde the use of it to hinder him, or further him. And so much shall serve for this Case,

FINIS.





THE FOURTH SERMON.

1 THESS. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

Case 6.
About want of
leasure to pray
by reason of
present busi-
nesses to be
speedily dis-
patched.



Noth^r Case of conscience in the
businessse of prayer is, what a man
is to doe, when hee is in a strait of
time, by reason of some weighty
businessse, that requires a quicke
and sudden dispatch, and gives him not the lea-
sure and liberty, that otherwise hee might have
had?

To this I answer, you shall finde, that in Scrip-
tures the prayers of Saints have beene sometimes
longer, and sometimes shorter. Our Saviour
CHRIST, you know, sometimes spent a whole
night

night in prayer; Surely he did not take so much time alwayes, and no doubt, wee have liberty sometimes to be longer, sometimes shorter, according as our occasions will permit. But yet this you must remember, that though the businesse bee great, yet that businesse that concernes the salvation of our soules, and the worship of God, is greater: And therefore, before and above all other services, this is still to be preferred: for it is a businesse of greater moment: take heed then you give a just weight to your businesse, and not suffer every small occasion that comes in to thrust out this duty; for heere you keepe not the due proportion, but neglect the greater, and take the lesse.

Besides, doe you not say, when you have great businesse in hand, that a man must have a dining time, and a sleeping time, &c. Why may wee not say as well, A man must have a praying time; is it not necessary? You know what *Iob* saith, you know the course that he kept in reading the word, (for that is cleerely meant in that place,) *It was more precious to him than his appointed food*: that is, he had rather omit his usuall meales, (for that he meanes by *his appointed food*) than to omit a constant course in performing those holy duties. Therefore, I say, it ought carefully to bee tooke heed of, that wee omit it not except it be in a very great strait; which if it should happen, we may be short in it, God tyes us not so exactly you see, for no rules are set down in the Scriptures, wherein we are tyed precisely to such an houre, to such a time,

Matters concerning salvation to be preferred before outward businesse.

We should allow time for prayer, as well as for other businesse.

a time, but *God* in mercy, and in wisdome, hath left it to our liberty: only observe this is the command, *Pray continually*, doe it exceeding often, at the least, keepe a constant course in it, (as wee heard before) though you should be the shorter in it.

Cautions about shortnes of prayer in great straits.

Caution 1. Husband time well two wayes.

I

Now let these five Cautions bee observed:

First, take heed that the straitning come not from your ill husbandry, that is, from your ill husbanding of time; for, if a man were carefull to redeeme time before, (it may be) hee need not bee put to such a strait as he is at that time, when he is to performe this duty. Suppose you have a journey to go, that requires much time, and you must bee gone early, you may so husband the time before, that you may get time enough for your journey, and for the performance of this duty: and so for other businesse, as I said in the morning, you should labour to sequester your selves to performe this duty of prayer, and therefore take heed you be good stewards of your time, and that you husband it well.

2

And likewise, this is another part of husbanding your time, that you let not that which is very precious, goe for things of small moment; for that is ill husbandry. You should redeeme the time, and buy it with the losse of something. You finde time enough to bestow in the weightiest businesse of your calling, in things that belong to the good of man, much more should you in this that belongs to the worship of *God*: And therefore, if it may be, redeeme it with some losse; so
you

you ought to husband it, otherwise you redeeme not time as you ought. This is the first Caution that ought to bee observed, to husband and redeeme the time well.

The second is, if wee be straitned at any time, recompence it at another time: for if it be not a feined excuse and pretence, if you frame not to your selves a straitning, when you have liberty, you will be carefull to spend more time in it at another season; by that you shall know your sincerity in it, that it is true, and that it is not an excuse, and a putting off.

Moreover, another Caution to be observed is, that you take not too much businesse upon you: if you be straitned with businesse, and therefore cannot be so large in the performance of this dutie, as otherwise you would if you did not take so much upon you, your selves are the cause of it. And therefore, he that takes lesse, he that spends more time in the things that belong to salvation, he hath made the better choice; as *Mary* made a better choice than *Martha*, though her employment also were good.

Likewise, as you must not pester your selves with too much businesse, so likewise you must take care, that your mindes be not too much intent upon them; for too much intention of minde upon businesse, causeth distraction in prayer, and causeth us to poste over the duty, as well as too much businesse: when a mans minde shoots it selfe too farre in businesse, when it is too much occupied about it, when it is too much intent, when

Caution 2.
Recompence
it another
time.

Caution 3.
Take heed of
too much bu-
sinesse.

Caution 4.
Be not too
intent upon
businesse.

Caution 5.
 Look to the
 ground of the
 strait.

Case 7.
 About use of
 the meanes.

Ans.
 Reasons why
 meanes must
 be used.

Reason 1.
 Else our de-
 sires are not
 good.

when the soule cleaves too fast upon the busines, and cannot loose it selfe to the performance of spirituall duties which require freedome.

The last Caution is, that the strait rise not from diffidence in God; and confidence in the use of the meanes; for it falls out of times when wee have businesse of moment in hand, there is a turning, and posting from one creature to another, from the use of one meanes to another, that wee cannot get time in prayer, not so much for want simply, but because we minde the meanes too much, we intend them too much, we doe not trust God enough with the businesse; if we did, we might spend lesse time in them, and more in seeking to him. So much for that Case.

Another Case of conscience in this businesse of calling upon God is, What a man is to doe for the use of the meanes; for when wee are bid to pray, and seeke to God, it is an ordinary question amongst us; But may wee not use the meanes too?

To this I answer, That prayer is so farre from excluding the meanes, that it includes them; for if the desire bee fervent, when wee desire any thing at Gods hands, it will make us diligent in the use of the meanes, to use a convenient diligence, as it will make you earnest in seeking to God, and in putting up your request to him. For, if a man shall pray, and bee negligent in the use of the meanes, I will bee bold to say it; it is but like the desire of the sluggard, that is, a languishing, and fainting desire: Hee desires, but
 his

his soule hath nothing, for he desires, but he puts his hand into his bosome : the desires which you expresse, when you pray, they are not fervent, they are not earnest, if you bee remisse in the use of the meanes. Hee that desires grace, and strength against sinfull lusts and temptation, and yet is remisse in the use of the meanes, by which grace should bee increased, and strength gained, to resist those corruptions and temptations; certainly his desires are but vaine and emptie desires.

Besides, it is an argument that wee trust not in **G o d**, that wee make no accompt of our prayers, except wee bee diligent in the use of the meanes, therefore wee are farre from excluding them; for, if you seeke to **G o d**, and trust to your prayers, and thinke that they will prevaile with him, it will worke this effect, that you will be carefull to use such meanes, as **G o d** hath ordained to bring the thing to passe. Even as, if a man seeke to a Physitian, to such a Physitian as hee trusts to, into whose hands hee would put his life; when this Physitian prescribes such a course, such a dyet, and such a thing to bee taken at such a time, the more hee rests upon the Physitian, the more carefull hee will bee to observe his prescription and rules: And so, in this case, the more you rest on *God*, the more carefull you will be to use such meanes as hee hath appointed, when hee hath said, these and these meanes are to bee used. In this case, I say, it is a signe your prayers are more
to

Reason 2.
Else it is a
signe we trust
not God.

Simile.

*Examine
the ends and
consequences*

to purpose, when you are diligent in the use of them, when you dare not slight nor neglect them.

Reason 3.
It is that wee
pray for.

Againe, you must consider this, that when we pray, at any time, wee doe not pray to have any thing done without meanes; but wee pray to have a blessing upon the meanes; and, if we pray for a blessing upon the meanes, our minde is not that they should be omitted: for, you know, *God* doth all things by second causes, he saves us not without our selves, that is, he useth us as instruments, he doth every thing by men, by creatures, and by meanes; and the end of our prayers is, not to have them done without meanes, but to have a blessing powred downe upon them. But that which is chiefly to be observed to cleere this point to you is this; That prayer is not the onely meanes, it is but part of the meanes to bring any thing to passe.

Reason 4.
Prayer not the
onely meanes.

There are two things to effect a businesse, that is, prayer and meanes both: we doe not say prayer is the onely meanes, indeed, then the other were excluded; but since it is but a part, and the other makes up the totall meanes of bringing any thing to passe, it doth not exclude them, but they may bee both joyned together, prayer and the use of the meanes. This is enough to shew that we may use meanes, we may pray, and lay our hand on the plough, wee may seeke to *God*, and be diligent, and as diligent as any body else. But now these three Cautions are to be observed:

Cautions a-
bout the use of
the meanes.

The

The first is, That, if wee doe use meanes, wee should use those that are right; for if you trust *God*, and depend upon him, you will not step out to any inordinate meanes, nor use lawfull meanes in an inordinate manner: If you doe so, it is an argument that your prayers are of no value in your owne esteeme, for you doe not rest on *God*, which if you did, you would never use any other meanes, than hee hath appointed.

Caution 2.
We must use
right meanes.

Secondly, though you use the meanes, and pray both, yet you must so use the meanes and prayer both, as that your confidence rests not only thereupon: for it is one thing to use the meanes, & it is another thing to have confidence in them. And therefore we say to you in this case, that you must doe as he that useth the light of the Sun; he so useth the light, as that he hath an eye upon the Sun; from whom that light comes; for he knowes, that if the Sun were set, the light would be gone. Or as he that takes water in a Cisterne, or River, he so takes it, as that he hath an eye to the fountaine, hee knowes if the fountaine were stoped, the River would be quickly dried up: So you should thinke with your selves, if I use any meanes, any creature, any instrument to bring things to passe, mine eye must be upon *God*: for all the helpe that we have from the creature, it is but as a beame to the helpe that comes from *God* himselfe. And therefore you must doe in this case, as Physitians are wont to doe, they put many ingredients into a thing, but it is one principall

Caution 3.
Not trust the
meanes.

Simile.

Simile.

Simile.

poll ingredient, amongst the rest, that he makes account will cure the disease: So doe in this case, make use, both of praier, & of the meanes, yet you must know, that neither prayer nor the meanes are the principall effecter of the thing, but the principall meanes, indeed wherein your confidence is to be, is God that doth bring every thing to passe: There is no good in the City, nor no evill, but he doth it; you know hee takes all to himselfe. All the meanes, by which good and ill is conveyed to you, doe not doe the thing, they are but the *vehicula*, they are but the instruments; as the beere and the wine wherein the Physicke is taken, but it is the Physicke and the medicine that cures; So all the meanes cannot doe it, it is the helpe and the power of God, the efficacie that comes from him, that brings things to passe, therefore that must be remembred, use the meanes continually, but with dependance upon God, with an eye upon him, let not your hearts rest upon them onely; for, if they doe, it is an inordinate use of them.

Simile.

Caution 3.
Not to sticke
to particular
meanes.

Lastly, you must take heed of sticking in any particular meanes; for if you doe, it is a signe that you trust not God as you ought to doe. It is a fault commonly, we pitch upon such a particular way, and we thinke that must doe it, or nothing. Now if God be trusted to, he hath more waies to the wood than one, he hath more meanes to bring a thing to passe than one: And therefore wee must leave it to him, who often doth it best

by

by another meanes than we dreamed of. As for example, *David* had a promise of the Kingdome; Now, when he had the Kingdome of *Judah*, yet you know, the Kingdome of *Israel* stood out: for *Ishboseth* had the Kingdome, and *Abner* was his chiefe Captaine: besides, in his comming into his Kingdome of *Judah*, we see how *God* wrought the businesse, without his device, by a meanes, that hee never thought of, in that battell, when *Saul* was killed, and so many of his sonnes, there was so much way made for him, when himselfe used no meanes to bring it to passe. Afterward when the Kingdome of *Israel* was kept from him, and he had onely *Judah*, wee see, *God* caused division between *Ishboseth*, and *Abner* his chiefe Captain, upon that comes *Abner*, and offers to *David* the whole Kingdome, but yet he was but a reconciled enemy; and what *Abner* might have done, he knew not. Therefore, *God* by his providence, (though *Joab* sinned in it,) caused *Adner* to be taken away by *Joab*: when this was done, yet *Ishboseth* was alive still; then were there two men set by the providence of *God*, (though it were a great sinne in them) to take away his head; and so the Kingdome came wholly to *David*: for, there were but two sonnes, *Mephioseth*, that was lame of his feet, and *Ishboseth*, that was lame in his minde, a weake man, unable to mannage so great and weighty a businesse to purpose: So *God* brought the businesse to passe by a way that *David* thought not of. Therefore, though wee may use meanes, yet, after the use of them, wee

H

must

Wee are more
apt to trust
men than
God.

Why God
works not by
our meanes.

Case 8.

About praying
in faith, when
a man wants a
particular pro-
mise, that the
thing which
he asketh
shalbe gran-
ted.

must depend upon *God*, and leave it to *God*, to take one meanes, or other. We must doe in this case, as we doe when we goe to a man, that is very skilfull to doe a worke for us : If wee goe to a Carpenter, and tell him we have such a thing to be done; or, if we goe to those that we call *Aquarioli*, that bring water from place to place, we tell him, this is our desire; but how he will worke, and which way he will bring it to passe, we know not, and yet we trust such an one, for we say, He is an honest man of his word, and if hee have undertaken it, it is enough : Why then will you not trust *God*, that goes so much beyond us, that hath an infinite wisdom, and an infinite power ? And therefore let us all so use the meanes, that withall wee keepe our dependance upon him, that we leave it to him, to use this or that meanes as it pleaseth him; for sometimes, it may be, he takes a way that which wee are about, sometimes hee leaves us partly destitute, and findes a way of his owne, that we might trust to him, and bee confident of his power and wisdom, in that he is able to doe the thing we desire. So much likewise shall serve for this Case.

Another Case is, What it is to pray in faith ? You know that is required. Now there is a common error in this point : for a man may say, If I pray for the salvation of another, I have no promise, how can I pray in faith ? When a man prays to bee guided in such a businesse, to have such an enterprize to bee brought to passe, to have deliverance from such a trouble, such a sickness,

nesse, from such a calamity, that he lyes under, he findes no particular promise, and for ought he knowes, it shall never be granted: How can hee then be said to pray in faith? For, to pray in faith is to beleeve that the thing we pray for shall bee brought to passe and accomplished.

I answer, that to pray in faith, is to goe as farre as the promise goes. Now no particular man hath any particular promise, that hee shall have such a deliverance, that hee shall have such a particular mercy granted him, and therefore it is not required to beleeve that that particular thing should be done.

But you will say, What faith is it then that is required?

I say, it is enough to beleeve that God is a Father, that hee is ready to heare, and not onely that hee is ready to heare, but that he is ready to doe that which is best for mee, in such a particular: for both are required, that you beleeve him to bee well affected towards you, as a Father, as one that tenders your good; and not onely so, but that hee will doe that, in that particular, that shall bee most for his owne glory, and for your good: and, if you doe so, you pray in faith; though (for the particular) you know not, whether it shall be granted, or no. Indeed, if we had a particular promise, as *Elias* had that it should not raine, &c. in that case, we were bound to beleeve in particular, but not having that, wee are not tyed unto it: for the promise is the object of faith, and the habit is

Ans.

Objec.

What faith is required in prayer.

Ans.

Wee are not bound to beleeve, that the particular thing shall be granted which we pray for.

not to worke beyond the object; for the object is the rule, and the limit of the habit: therefore you may pray in faith, when yet you have no ground to beleieve, and to thinke, that that particular thing should bee granted. For example, if a father pray, that his sonne may have grace wrought in his heart, that his soule may bee saved, it may bee the LORD will never doe it; or, if one friend pray for another to the same purpose, though the thing be not done, yet the prayer returns into his bosome, hee is no loser by it, there is a reward belongs to him, for seeking to God in sincerity, it is his duty, that hee should do so. The like I may say for every other particular case. And this encouragement you may have, that there is never any particular prayer put up, wherein you seeke things that are not granted, but you mistake in it; for, if you beleieve thus farre, as I said to you, bee sure that your prayers are accepted, God will doe that which is best for you, and your prayers shall not bee lost. So much also for that.

If our prayers
be not gran-
ted we mistake
in them.

Case 9.
About a mans
knowledge
that his pray-
er is heard.
Answ.

The last cause is, How shall a man know whether his prayer be heard, or not?

For answer to this wee will give you this one rule, (and that is as farre as wee can goe) That those prayers that are made by the assistance of Gods holy Spirit, it is certaine, they are alwayes heard: if you finde that at any time, you need make no question, but that God hears it, and will doe the thing, observing the Cautions that wee have given you heretofore, that is, for the meanes,

meanes, the manner, the time, and the measure : for it cannot be , but that when the heart is enlarged by G O D s owne Spirit, and the prayer is an expreſſion of holy deſires , the L O R D alwayes heares. That place is cleare for it, *Rom. 8. 27.* that *He knowes the meaning of the ſpirit* : that is , he ſo knowes it , that hee hearkeneth to it , that he alwayes accepts of it : and therefore , when you come in ſuch a caſe, at any time, that your hearts are enlarged in a ſpeciall manner : Marke, I ſay , when your hearts are enlarged in a ſpeciall manner , and that, with holy deſires, certainly, then G O D meanes to grant our requests : hee would not ſend his ſpirit to bee an interceſſor in your hearts, if hee did not meane to doe it : for, on the contrary, he withholdes his ſpirit , he gives us not that enlargement of heart. Onely this diſtinction muſt be carefully remembred; you may be ſometime very earneſt , (the parent may be very earneſt for his child, as *David* was for his, and *Moses* for ought wee ſee , was earneſt to have gone into the land of *Canaan* , they were things that they deſired) and yet that may be an expreſſion of naturall deſires. In which caſe a man may bee very earneſt, and yet hee cannot build upon it , to ſay, my heart is much enlarged in prayer , and therefore I ſhall be heard.

But obſerve this , when the heart is enlarged with holy deſires , and that in a ſpeciall manner, ſomewhat more than ordinary, as that , you ſee , it is the worke of the ſpirit of G O D , quickning your heart , opening it wide , ſtrengthening and

Rom. 8. 27.

When God will grant our prayers, and when not,

Note.

What kinde of enlargement of heart argues that our prayers are heard.

inlarging it, and sharpening grace and holinesse in you, in those requests you put up to God; in this case, build upon it, for you may be sure your prayers are heard from that ground wee even now gave you, *He knowes the meaning of the spirit.* So much shall serve for those Cases of Conscience in this spirituall duty of calling upon God.

Now the last thing wee propounded was this: What the qualification is that is required in our prayers: for since we have said so much of prayer, it is a necessary thing that wee know what conditions are required, that it may bee acceptable.

Qualifications or conditions required in that prayer that shall bee accepted.

I. Caution

That the person be right.
lam. 5. 16.

I

Because a man must have Christ, before he have any thing else.

2

The generall Covenant is before the particular.

And the first (we will commend to you, which is the ground, and first in order before all the rest) is, that *the person be right. The prayer of the righteous doth prevaile much, James 5. 16.*

The ground of it is this, a man must first have Christ before he can have any thing else, *He hath given us all things else with Christ*: If wee have all things else, if we have not him, it is nothing; *All his promises (you know) are yes, and Amen, but it is in him*; so that we must first have him.

And besides, the generall Covenant must goe before the particular: for the ground of all prayer is this or that particular promise, but you must first be within the Covenant, you must first have the generall Covenant belonging to you, before you can have the particular branches of it; & therefore a man must be within the covenant, his person must be first righteous, before he be accepted: & therefore let none deceive himselfe in this case, to thinke

thinke thus with himselfe, he hopes his heart is sincere, and his prayers right, and his ends are good; for though all this were true, yet if his person be not right, God regards it not. You know the blood of a sheepe, and the blood of a swine, they are both alike it may be, the blood of the swine is better than the other; yet the blood of the swine was not to be offered, because it was the blood of a swine. So in this case, the prayer of an unregenerate man may be as well framed, for the petitions; for every thing that is required immediately to a prayer; but the heart, from whence it comes, the person, from whence it proceeds, that is it that makes the difference: let this therefore be chiefly observed, that the person be right. And therefore you shall finde *Psal. 4. 3. David makes that the ground, why his prayers should be heard: saith he, Be ye sure that God hath chosen for himselfe the godly man: And when I call upon him I shall be heard.* For that is the ground that hee takes to himselfe, why he shall be heard, because God hath chosen to himselfe the godly man. As if he should say, I am of the number of the godly, and therefore you that are my enemies, and thinke to prevaile against me, I feare you not, for I pray to a God that will defend me; I am a godly man, and upon that ground I beleeve that my prayer is heard. *Beloved,* otherwise though wee pray, and pray hard, yet our sinnes cry lowder than our prayers, they, cry downe our prayers, they make a greater noise than they for the noise that our sinnes make is like the noise of a Thunder,

Simile.

An unregenerate man may frame a prayer as well as a holy man.

Psal. 4. 3.

Our sinne out-cry our prayers till our persons be right.

H 4

when

Simile,

2

Remove particular finnes.

Why the
Saints be-
ginne their
Prayers with
humiliation.

1 Tim. 2. 8.

when the noise of our prayers is but like the crackling of thornes, which cannot be heard for the noise that sinne makes in the eares of the Lord. Thus it is, in this case, when we come before God in our finnes, when a man comes into his presence in his unregeneracy.

But this is not all, for certaine it is a man that is within the Covenant, may have a particular sinne, (as you heard heretofore) that may intercept his prayers, and that may hinder the blessing: so that, that sinne must be removed, before his prayers can be heard. It is true, *The Sonne abides in the house for ever*, but yet the sonne may commit such an offence, that his father may use him as a servant, hee may deny his requests, and refuse them, when hee comes to seeke any thing at his hands. And therefore, there must be a particular reconciliation, a particular repentance, that sinne must be removed, and done away, that stands in the way. This was the method the Saints alwayes have kept in calling upon God: See it in *Daniel*, and *Ezra*, all of them, for the most part, when they make any compleat prayer, we see, still they begin with humiliation, and confession of finnes. And the reason of it is, that their persons might bee cleare and innocent, that those finnes might bee removed, which would stand in their way; and this likewise is a ground of that 1 Tim. 2. 8. saith the Apostle there, *I will, that prayers bee made in all places, that you lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting*: The meaning is this, not onely that a man bee within the Covenant, but that

that he be cleansed from all particular sinnes, that might cleave to him, and hang upon him. As for example, when thou wouldest be accepted of God, if there do any particular sinne hang on thee, that must bee removed by renewing thy repentance. And besides that, see what the Scripture takes notice of, when a man comes to pray, his heart must be cleansed from pride, (for *God resists the proud*) his heart must bee brought to an humble disposition; likewise it must be cleansed from wrath, hee must *lift up pure hands without wrath*; which is oft required; *Math. 5. Leave thine offering, and goe and make peace with thy brother.* So likewise from unthankfulness; our prayers are not accepted, except we be thankfull for mercies received. The like wee may say of every particular sinne; we must bee carefull to cleanse our selves from all sinfull lusts, and corrupt affections, that they have not dominion in our hearts; but that wee lift up pure hearts, and innocent hands. And this is the first thing that is required, that the person bee right; that is, not onely that hee bee within the Covenant, but likewise that those particular sinnes be removed, that may be an impediment to his prayers.

The second thing required is *Faith*; *Lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting.* You know that in *James*, *Let him that wanteth wisdom aske of God, let him aske in faith, and waver not.* So that though prayer be the key to open Gods treasures, yet faith is the hand that turns the key, without which it will doe no good.

VWhen we pray we must cleanse our hearts.

1

From pride.

2

From wrath.

Mat. 5. 23, 24.

3

From unthankfulness.

1. Requisite or condition is faith.
James 1. 5. 6.

Simile.

Now

Why the Lord
requires faith
in prayer.

1

2

3

James 1. 6.

Now the Lord requires faith, partly, for his owne sake, he should not otherwise be acknowledged, if you did not trust him, when you come to seeke him, if you did not rest upon him. Besides he should lose his glory; for in this we glorify him when wee trust him, and wee dishonour him when we distrust him; when we come and seeke to him, and doe not rest upon him, wee dishonour him.

Besides, in regard of us he requires faith, and will not heare us without it; because, as it is James 1. 6. in the same place, where faith is required, there is good reason why it is required; for faith the Apostle there, *He that beleeveth not, or he that wavers, hee is like a wave of the Sea*: that is, sometimes in his prayer he is very earnest, as a wave that swells high; sometimes againe he will be nothing at all; yea, faith the Apostle, he is not only uneven in the businesse of prayer, sometimes earnest and forward, and sometimes giving over againe, off and on, but such a man is unstable in all his wayes; for he that trusts in God, will be careful, not in prayer only, but to keep all his wayes right; but he that trusts him not, wavers in every thing: he is (it may be) diligent in prayer, he will looke to his wayes for a time, but he rests not upon God, he rests upon other things, *Hee is like a wave*, he is not constant: and therefore faith is required. Now when I say faith is required, know this, that there is a double faith required:

A twofold
faith required
in our prayers.

The one is a faith in the providence of God, the other is a faith in his promise.

First,

First, I lay, faith in *Gods providence*; (which is a thing of much moment, and we are apt to forget it.) We see it cleerely, *Psal. 146. Blessed is he that trusts in the God of Jacob, &c. who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, who keepes covenant, and mercy for ever*: you see faith there required in the providence, *He made heaven and earth, the sea*; he is such a God, who is able to bring great things to passe; for he made heaven and earth: and is he not able to doe any thing besides?

I
Faith in Gods
providence.
Psal. 146. 5, 6.

Secondly, there must be a faith in his *promises*, which is expressed in the next words, *He keepeth Covenant for ever*. So likewise to expresse the defect of it: You see when *Martha and Mary* came to *Christ* to raise *Lazarus*, they beleaved he was ready enough to doe it, (there was faith in his willingness) but they wanted faith in his providence, for *Martha* comes to him, and tells him, *Lord, faith shee, Hee hath beene in the grave foure dayes*? as if shee had said, surely now it cannot be done, if thou hadst come sooner, it might have beene brought to passe: so she beleaved him to be willing, but there wanted faith in the providence.

2
Faith in the
promises.

Againe, as here faith in the providence was wanting; so we see, in the *Leper*, there was faith in the providence, (it may be, the other was wanting, but that is not expressed, it is more probable hee had both) *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole*: Here was an evidence of faith in the providence, he acknowledgeth his power, *if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole*: but because **CHRIST** did fulfill his desire, it is likely he had
faith

Math. 7. 7.

We doubt of
Gods willing-
nes more than
of his power
to grant our
requests.

How faith may
be strength-
ned in prayer.
From Gods
Attributes,
which are of
two sorts:
1 Absolute.

1 *Iustice.*

faith in the promise too ; so, I say, there must be a faith, first, in the providence ; secondly, there must bee a faith also in the promise of God : you have ground enough for that, you have his sure word for it, he hath said, *Aske and you shall have, seeke and yee shall finde, knock and it shall bee opened to you ; and whatsoever you aske, if it be according to his will, it shall be done to you.* So that is the thing wee are chiefly to looke unto, to consider this faith in Gods promise ; for men are ready to say, I doubt not but God is able, but all the question is, whether he be willing or no. And therefore, if we will have our prayers strong, and prevalent, wee must be carefull to strengthen our faith in his promise : for, as that is strong, so our prayers do more prevaile with God. It is a matter of much moment, and therefore we will shew briefly how your faith may be strengthened, and likewise how you may know it.

First, you shall strengthen your faith, if you consider the *nature* of God. *Beloved*, this is a great cause why wee beleve not the promise of God, and his readinesse to helpe us in difficult cases, because wee are Ignorant of the nature of God, of the Attributes of God ; or at least, we do not consider them. For example, (that I may open it to you a little, and shew you the way of making use of the Attributes of God, in calling upon him, & strengthening our faith from them) consider, first, the *Iustice* of God, (I will give you examples, how the Saints have still strengthened their faith from Gods Attributes) *David* useth this

Argument

Argument, *Lord, thou art Iust, I am Innocent*; when hee telleth God of his Iustice, and withall expresseth his owne Innocencie, it is a strong Argument. *David*, you see, useth it oft, (I need not to name particulars) *Lord, reward me according to mine Innocencie, &c. thou knowest I am righteous*, and mine enemies have done mee thus and thus much wrong, and *thou art iust*: God cannot deny this; for it is a strong Argument, that is taken from such an Attribute.

So againe, the goodnesse of God; *Lord, thou art full of mercie*; on the other side, *I am full of miserie*: and when these are put together, it is a great meanes to strengthen our faith. And therefore, wee see, *David* often expresseth his owne calamity, his disease, how hee was oppressed by enemies, and slandered, &c. and Gods mercie, (that is the ground of it,) *God is full of compassion*: as if he should say, thou art full of goodnesse, and I am in calamity, and miserie, at this time: and that was an Argument whereby he strengthened his faith.

So againe, another Attribute of God is, his glory: when wee make the Argument thus, *Lord, thou hast an eye to thy glory*, and I aime at thy glory: In such a request, it is a strong prevailing Argument with him. You know, *Moses* prevailed with him, when he sought the saving of the whole people of *Israel*, *Lord*, saith he, *thy name will be polluted, what will the heathen say?* And since I aime at thy glory in it, deny me not. And likewise *Ezekias*; and *David*, they use the same Argument

2. Mercy.

3. Glory.

gument to God, *shall the dust praise thee ? shall any glory be given to thee in the grave ? shall wee bee able to doe any thing for thy honour, when wee are dead ?* So that the Arguments that are taken from Gods glory, and our aime at his glory, is another means to strengthen our faith.

4 Power.

Moreover, the power of God, that is another Attribute, whereby wee may conceive the same Argument, (as I said before,) when wee goe to God, and expresse our weaknesse, and his power, Lord, we are weake, we are able to doe nothing; Lord, thou art Almighty, thou mad'st heaven and earth, it is a strong argument to prevaile with him. So, we see, *Aſa* prevailed with God, 2 Chr. 14. *Oh Lord, ſaith he, it is all one wiſh thee to helpe wiſh many, or few,* and we reſt upon thee: as if he ſhould ſay; We are exceeding few, we are exceeding weake, we are able to doe nothing, but thou art able to do it, with a few, as well as with a great multitude; there he puts them together. And the like we have of *Iehoaſaphat*, Lord, *we have no ſtrength to ſtand before our enemies, but our eyes are to thee:* As if he ſhould ſay, thou haſt ſtrength and power enough, thou art able to doe it, though we are unable. This is another Argument taken from the power of God.

5 Vnchange-
bleneſſe.

Again, the unchangeableneſſe of God. When one comes to the Lord, and ſhall ſay to him, Lord, thou haſt done thus and thus in former times for thy ſervants, Lord, thou haſt done thus and thus for me, in another caſe; and thou art unchangeable, thou art the ſame God: this is a great means

meanes to strengthen our faith. As you know, it is in your Law-suites, when you have a president, it addes strength to the cause, so when we have presidents for this, it will adde strength to us, and that strength is taken from Gods unchangeablenesse: if we put them together, *Lord*, thou art unchangeable, *Lord*, thou hast done it to other men in the like case, thou hast done it to me also in the like case: It is a strong Argument, and an Argument that *David* useth; you see how hee is stayed up by it, *Psal.* 22. 4. *Lord, our fathers trusted in thee, and were delivered, they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.* As if he should say, *Lord*, thou art unchangeable, thou heardest them in the same case when they trusted in thee; now, it is my case, and therefore I beseech thee to helpe mee in my distresse.

Simile.

Psal. 22. 4.

Againē, the faithfulness of God, the fidelity of God, that is another of his Attributes: and when wee make our Argument thus, *Lord*, thou art faithfull, and I trust in thee, it is a strong Argument, for you know, it is an Argument that prevails much with men; a man is ready to say, hee trusts me, I must not deceive him: Much more the *Lord* keepes Covenant, and mercy for ever. When wee come, and use this to him, *Lord*, thou art faithfull, thou hast said, thou wilt keepe Covenant and mercy for ever, thou canst not doe otherwise, it is thy nature, thou canst not deny thy selfe, and I rest on thee, I depend on thee, in such a case, it cannot bee the *Lord* should faile us: If a man will not faile one that trusts in him, certainly

6 Faithfulness.

certainly the *Lord* will not, and that is an Argument that is used oft; thou never failest them that trust thee.

a. Relative.

Then, besides the absolute Attributes of *God*, consider his relative Attributes; he is a *Father*, and a *Master*: it is a strong Argument that is taken from these. If we goe to the *Lord*, and say, *Lord*, thou art a *Father*, thou art a *Master*, thou art an husband; Whither should the children goe, but to their father? Whither should the wife goe, but to her Husband? Whither should the servants goe, but to their Master, to their *Lord*? *Lord*, thou hast commanded us to provide for our owne, and *He is worse than an Infidel that provides not for his owne*: *Lord*, we belong to thee, we are thine. Wee see, *David* useth this Argument, that *God* had made him. You have it oft in the *Psalmes*, that *God* had made him, not onely his Creature, but had made him againe, hee was his servant; *I am thy servant*: hee useth oft this Relative, that *God* was his *God*, and that he was *Gods servant*, one that did belong to him, and that did depend upon him. And surely (my Beloved) dependance, and seeking to *God*, is a great meanes to winne him to us. When wee see another depend upon us, and lookes after no body else, that is an effectuall motive with men: the same is as prevalent with *God*; and therefore may strengthen our faith. Now, when I say these Arguments prevaile with *God*, the meaning is indeed, that they prevaile with us, they strengthen our faith, they enable us to believe, that *God* is ready to helpe

Arguments in
prayer strengthen
our faith.

helpe us, and when wee beleeve it, and trust up-
on him, then indeed G O D is ready to second
it, because then we are prepared, wee can then
put up our desires in the prayer of faith; other-
wise they are put up with doubting, and that
makes them unacceptable to G O D, and uneffe-
ctuell. And now, as I have shewed you the way,
so likewise in a word, we will shew you when we
doe pray in faith, (for that is a thing that is very
usefull) you shall know it by this; (for I adde that,
because I see the Scriptures requires it, as such a
maine condition, without which a man cannot be
accepted, *See it done to thee according to thy faith*;
it is every where inculcated) you shall know it I
say, by the quietnesse of your minde, and your se-
curity. When a man calls upon G O D, and his
minde is quiet in it, it is a signe that he beleeves,
and trusts in him, it is a prayer of faith. *Hannah*,
you know, in that case, *looked no more sad*, be-
cause shee trusted in God, shee beleeved the thing
should be done and rested therein: and therefore if
you find solicitude and perplexity in your mind,
it is a signe that your prayers want so much faith;
for if you did rest upon God, you would be quiet,
and secure in him. *For one up of the world is moved.*

Secondly, if you doe beleeve, you will conti-
nue in prayer. You know, it was an argument of
the faith of the woman of *Canaan*, that she conti-
nued, that she would take no deniall; though the
Lord did not grant her request, but put her off, yet
she held out: & what was the reason of it? because
she beleeved that he was the son of *David*, that he

I

was

How wee may
know that we
pray in faith.

I

By the quiet-
nesse of the
minde after.

2

By contin-
uance in prayer.

Simile.

Esay 28.

3
Diligence in
the use of the
meanes,

was merciful, and that he would heare in the end. So that continuance in prayer, is an argument we doe beleeeve the *Lord*. As a man that beleeves, such a man is within the house whom hee desires to speake with, is content to wait long for him: Or hee, that hath a suit, and knowes that hee shall have an end of it at such a time, he will never give over till it bee effected: So it is in this case, if we beleeeve wee will be content to wait, *He that beleeves will not make haste*, because he trusts in God, and depends upon him.

Lastly, a diligent use of those meanes that God hath prescribed, and no other, is a great argument that our prayer is with faith. And thus wee have shewed you the two things that are required in prayer; first, that the person must be righteous, and within the Covenant: secondly, that there must bee a beleaving in God: as also how this faith is wrought, both in his providence, and in his promises; and likewise how wee shall know, whether our prayers be the prayers of faith, or no.

FINIS.

THE



THE FIFTH SERMON.

1 THESS. 5. 17.

Pray continually.



THE next condition required in prayer is *feruency*, you know the place, *The prayer of the righteous availeth much, if it be fervent.* The Lord requires this qualification in prayer, because it puts the heart into a holy and spirituall disposition: for it is not simply the making of the request, that God looks for at our hands, but such a working upon our hearts by prayer, such a bringing of them to a good frame of grace, by that duty, that thereby we are more

3. Condition required in prayer is *feruencie.* James 5. 16.

What God requites in prayer.

Why God re-
quires ferven-
cy.

Simile.

fitted to receive the mercy, that before we were not. When a man is fervent in prayer, it sets all the wheels of his soule the right way, it puts the heart into a holy and spirituall disposition and temper; so that the *Lord* sees it now fit to bestow mercy upon such a man, that before was unfit, by reason of his untowardnesse, and stubbornesse of heart, by reason of that uncleane and unholy disposition, that he saw in him. And therefore hee will have prayer fervent; not so much because the very fervency of prayer it selfe is respected, but because by vertue of that fervency the heart is made better: when a man comes to *God* with a request, like the request of the patient to the Physitian, it may bee the Physitian denies long, when the patient asks things that are pleasant and agreeable to him; not because he is unwilling to give them, but because his body must bee brought into another temper, hee must take a vomit, or a purge, which perhaps is grievous to the Patient, but this must be done before he bee fit to receive such cordials: so the *Lord* deales with his servants, though hee bee willing to bestow such mercies on them, yet, because they are not fitted, he requires continuance in prayer, and fervencie in it. Therefore, we say, in prayer all the graces of *Gods* Spirit are set on worke, and the more fervent the prayer is, the more they are intended, the more they are acted, the more they are increased, and therefore the *Lord* is moved by this fervency, to bestow a mercy on us, that otherwise hee would not doe.

But

But now all the question is, what this fervencie is?

You shall find it usually expressed in the Scriptures by such metaphors as these, *Crying to the Lord, wrestling with the Lord, striving with him, and giving him no rest*; wherein these two things are to be marked:

First, a man is said then to be fervent, when he puts all his strength to prayer, when he is very earnest, and importunate with the *Lord*, when hee strives and contends with him, though hee finde many difficulties, and impediments, yet he breakes through all; this is to be fervent in prayer, to be importunate with the *Lord*. For example, when a man comes to pray, hee findes many discouragements, and himselfe (perhaps) guilty of many sinnes, yea, he findes little holinesse, he hath but feeble faith to his owne sense, and much deadnesse of spirit, yet hee continues instant notwithstanding; nay, further hee doth not onely finde these impediments in himselfe, but hee findes the *Lord* exceeding backward to the thing, either giving no answer, turning the deafe eare to him, or (it may be) giving a contrary answer, as to the woman of *Canaan*. But to give you a particular example; when a man comes to pray for health, it may be his sicknes increaseth upon him more; when he prayes to overcome such a lust or temptation, it may be, it is doubled upon him; when hee prayes for such a deliverance; it may be, the oppression growes more and more; as it was with the *Israelites*, when they sought for deliverance

Quest.

Ans.

VWhen a man is said to bee fervent.

I

VWhen we put to all our strength notwithstanding difficulties.

Mat. 15.

verance out of *Egypt*, the oppression grew greater: now to hold out notwithstanding this, and to continue in prayer, and to outwastle *God* in it, though he seeme backward to the request; this is to be fervent in prayer.

2
VVhen we are
constant.

Secondly, fervency is not onely loud praying, but continuall knocking, when a man is not onely importunate with the *Lord*, but hee continues long, hee will not give over, till he have got the blessing. You know, *Jacobs* fervencie was seene in that, that he continued all night, *He wrestled with the Lord*. What was the reason that he wrestled? *He would not let him goe, till he had got the blessing*, till he had obtained the thing he sought for. So I say, this earnestnesse, & continuance in prayer, the breaking through all difficulties, this is to wrestle with the *Lord*: for all wrestling and striving (you know) supposeth some opposition on the other part. Indeed, if there were no opposition, it were a small thing; but, I say, when the *Lord* is most backward, when the thing is most improbable, when there is much difficultie, so that you know not how it should be brought to passe, yet if you continue striving, and give the *Lord* no rest, as though you would never give over; this is fervency in prayer, and this is a condition that the *Lord* requires. But here two Cautions must be remembered, that we mistake not this fervency:

Cautions a-
bout fervency.

I
That it be a
fruit of faith.
Simile.

First, (remember) fervencie, if it be right, it must be a fruit of faith: for there is a fervency that comes not from faith, but from a naturall sense of want, when a man is indeed as a swine that

that is pinched, which, you know, will cry exceeding loud, not because it looks for helpe, but because it is pinched: so any other creature, or a man naturally will use importunity, when he wants any thing, and will be earnest in his requests; such fervency the *Lord* regards not, because there is no more but a meere expression of naturall desires, there is no holinesse in it, there is no fire of the Spirit; but when this is added to it, that there is not onely a sense of the thing wee want, but also a hope of mercie, a ground to beleve that I shall have the thing granted, and out of this ground I am earnest and importunate; now earnestnesse is a fruit of faith. When Iesus Christ lived upon earth, when men came and cried earnestly unto him, and were exceeding importunate; some to bee healed of their diseases, some to have devils cast out, & ~~you see~~ *see his answer* was still to them, Be it to thee, (how?) not according to their importunity and fervency, but according to their faith: as if hee should say, I heed not, I regard not all this clamour and earnestnesse, if they bee onely expressions of such wants, if they bee onely in the sense of such need, and no more; but if they proceed from faith, and that faith set you on worke to call upon mee, *Be it unto thee according to that.* For indeed, these two things make up fervency in prayer, *sense of need, and hope of mercie*; when a man hath faith and hope to increase his fervencie, and it ariseth from that ground, as well as out of the other, (not that I exclude the other) for it is a very great helpe, and

When fervency is a fruit of faith,

VVhence fervency springs.

Simile,

that which puts stickes on the fite (as it were) to make our fervency the more) I say, from sense of our need, when wee consider seriously what want wee have, and then adde this hope, and faith; when these two shall set you on worke, this fervency is a fruit of faith. And this is one caution that must be remembred.

2. *Caution*
That is bee
mingled with
sincerity.

Another Caution is this, that your fervency be joynd with sincerity, for a man may be fervent to obtaine such and such blessings, as he may begge at at **G O D**s hand very earnestly, he may aske credit, he may aske to have guidance in such a businesse, he may aske wisdom to bring such an enterprife to passe, hee may aske health, and continuance of life, but to what end? if it be that he may bestow it upon his lusts, if it bee that hee may live more deliciously, that hee may be some body more in the world, that hee may have outward conveniences, such as his flesh desires, if this bee all, here this fervencie is not regarded; not that these things are excluded, for the **Lord** gives us leave to seeke our owne comforts, and you may be earnest, and importunate, even for the comfort it selfe; but yet all these, if they bee not capable of a further use, if that be not intended, but the abuse of them, and an intent to use them another way, the **L O R D** heeds it not, it is no true fervencie. And therefore in *Rom. 12. 11.* it is the exhortation of the Apostle, *Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*; when wee many times (it may bee are fervent in spirit, serving our selves, we are fervent to aske such and such requests, out of

Note.

Rom. 12. 11.

of ends of our owne, as when a man desires able gifts, high gifts, to get glory, and to get wealth to himselfe, and not to serve his master, this is to aske the talent, not for his masters use, but for his owne; doe you thinke the *Lord* will heare such prayers? can you expect it at his hands? You shall see the contrary practice in the Saints; when they were earnest with the *Lord* for any thing, still they expresse that to him, and say, *Lord*, wee desire not this for our selves, but for thy glory, that wee may use it for our owne purpose. &c. *David*, when hee was earnest for life, when hee was in sicknesse, and doubted of his recovery, what argument doth he use? *Lord*, saith hee, *shalt thou have glory in the grave?* As if hee should say, if thou give me life, I will give it thee againe, I will improve it, and husband it to thy advantage, and not to mine owne. And so *Hannah*, when she was earnest for a sonne, she makes this promise to the *Lord*, that he shall be for him and his advantage; she would dedicate him to his use, and consecrate him to his service. So *Jacob*, when hee was earnest with the *Lord* to give him meat, drinke, and cloathes, &c. *Lord*, saith hee, *if thou doe, I will give the tenth part to thee againe.* I say, when the heart is thus disposed in our servencie, in our importunitie, when wee aske any thing at the *Lords* hands, that our conscience tells us within, that if wee had it, wee would bestow it upon the *Lord*, wee would not abuse it, wee would not spend it on our lusts, it should not bee to serve our selves, but to serve the *Lord* with-
all,

What argument the Saints haue used in their prayers.

4 Condition
required in
prayer is hu-
mility.
Iam. 4.
2 Chron. 7. 14.

Isay. 66. 2.

Reason why
humility is re-
quired in
prayer.

I
God exalts
such,

Gen. 31.

all, then our fervency is rightly ordered.

The next condition required, is *humility*; as *James 4. The Lord gives grace to the humble*: And *2 Chron. 7. 14. If my people humble themselves, and call upon my name, then will I heare in heaven, and grant their requests.* And throughout the Scripture, you see, that this is a condition that the Lord puts in every where; *Hee hath respect to the low estate, Isay. 66. 2. saith the Lord, All these things have my hands made, looking upon all the creatures, the whole* ~~creation~~ *, they are all good, and I have respect unto them; but, saith he, I regard not all these in comparifon of an humble heart, To him will I looke that is of an humble and contrite spirit*: when the Lord lookes upon our prayers, if they come not from a broken heart, they want that condition that he looks for: *for He gives grace to the humble, that is, to such a man as is little in his owne eyes, and therefore fit to be exalted, fit to receive a mercy at Gods hands.*

You know, it is a rule that the Lord keeps; for such as are humble and low, such he exalts; and those that exalt themselves he puls downe. Now when a man is little in his owne eyes, that parvity, that sense of his owne unworthinesse is a prevailing argument with him; and therefore *Gen. 32. Iacob useth that Argument, when hee comes to put up his petition, to bee delivered from Esau: Lord, I am lesse than all thy mercies; that is, take any one of the mercies, the least, and put it in one end of the balance, & put me in the other and I am lesse than it, and lighter than it, take all the*

the worth that is in me, it is not heaue enough for the least merrey. Now, when hee was thus humbled, and little, and vile in his owne eyes, the Lord bestowed that mercy on him, hee was now fit to receive it. So *David*, when the Lord sends him word by *Nathan*, that he would build him a house for ever, (you see how hee expressed himselfe) *Hee went into the house of the Lord, and saue before him, and said, Lord, what am I, and what is my fathers house?* As if hee should say, I was taken out of the dust, I was one of the meanest men of *Israel*, and a man of no account, of no worth, and yet thou hast had respect unto me thus farre, not onely to make me King over thy people; but to build my Kingdome, and my house, to make me a constant house for ever. I say, this sense of our owne unworthinesse, makes us more fit to receive the merrey, to bee exalted by receiving such a request, as wee put up to the Lord; and therefore hee regards the prayer of the humble.

1 Sam. 7. 18.

Moreover, God gives grace to the humble, that is, he shewes favour to them, when they come and aske any thing at his hands, because an humble man will be ready to doe whatsoever hee will, it is an expression of *David*, in *Acts* 13. 22. *Hee will doe whatsoever I will*, that may bee said of every humble man, he is exceeding pliable to the Lords will, hee is ready to doe whatsoever hee knowes to bee his pleasure, hee resists him in nothing. Now, when a man will doe whatsoever God will, the Lord will be ready to doe whatsoe-

2
God gives
grace to such.

Acts 13. 22.

ver

Mat. 15 28.

ver he will; he will be ready to say to him, as he did to the *Canaanite*, *Oh woman, bee it to thee as thou wilt.* When a man, on the other side, resists the *Lord*, (as every proud man doth, saith the text) the *Lord* resists him, the *Lord* resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. A resisting spirit causeth the *Lord* to resist our prayers; and therefore it is, that the *Lord* is ready to the humble man, because hee yeelds to the *Lord* in all things; and when a man yeelds to the *Lord* (take that for a rule) in obeying *Gods* commandements, *God* will yeeld to us in granting our petitions.

Note.

3.

It is an acceptable sacrifice.

Psal. 51. 16, 17.

Besides, when the heart is humbled, and broken, and contrite, it is an acceptable sacrifice to the *Lord*, which winnes it at his hands: he smells a sweet savour from such a sacrifice above all other; yea, it is that which sets a high price upon every sacrifice that wee offer, the best prayers, the best workes, that proceed not from an humble heart, he regards them not: as *Psal. 51*: *Lord*, saith *David*, *if I offer sacrifice, thou wilt not regard it, but the sacrifice of a contrite, and humble spirit*; those thou regardest, and those sacrifices that proceed from it. When wee come to make a petition to the *Lord*, (it was the manner in the old law not to come empty-handed) a proud person comes empty-handed; but an humble person comes with a sacrifice, and the best sacrifice; because he sacrifices himselfe, and his owne will, that is, he empties himselfe of himselfe, he opens a dore to the *Lord* to come, and dwell in him, when a proud man barres him out; such a sacrifice

since the Lord is well pleased with, and such a sacrifice speaks for one, it makes a way for his requests, and therefore the Lord hearkens to it.

Lastly, the Lord is ready to heare those that are humble, because whatsoever they receive, they take it as of grace, and not as debt: whereas a proud man, a man that hath a good conceit of himselfe, a man that is lift up in his owne opinion, thinkes it to be due, he thinkes there is some correspondence betweene his works, and the wages. You know what is said of the Pharisee, that the Publican went away justified rather than he. Why so? Because the Publican thought himselfe worthy of nothing. And therefore Ezek. 36. 31. when the Lord promiserh those great mercies to his people, he requires this condition of them, that they should acknowledge themselves worthy to be destroyed. When a man hath a sense of his owne unworthinesse, and so comes to the Lord, and askes it as of meere grace and mercy, that is a great motive to prevaile with him: for he is very carefull of that. You know in Deut. 8. 11. how wary the Lord was in giving this rule to them; Take heed when thou comest into that good Land, thinke not to say with thy selfe, the Lord hath done this for my owne righteousness. He saith he, I have not donee for thee, but for my covenant which I made with Abraham, Isaac and Iacob. It is, for my owne name sake, for my mercies sake, for the covenant that I confirmed with them, that is, the covenant in Iesus Christ, therefore I have done it, and not for your own righteousness. So then you see, that this

4

They receive
all as of free
grace.

Luke 18.

Ezek. 36. 31.

Deut. 8. 11.

this is a condition the *Lord* will have observed in our calling upon him, that our hearts be humbled, that a man be little, and vile in his owne eyes; that he come with a broken, and contrite heart, pliable to him in all things, ready to obey him; when the heart is so disposed, hee gives grace, that is, he shewes favour, hee is ready to grant our requests.

5. Condition required in prayer is, to sanctifie the *Lord* in our hearts.

The next condition required in prayer, is, that wee sanctifie the *Lord* in our hearts. You know, when *Nadab* and *Abihu* drew neere unto him with a common fire, (when they should have brought such fire as came from heaven, holy fire) the *Lord* destroyed them: and he gives this reason, *For I will be sanctified in those that draw neere to me.* When wee come to call upon the *Lord*, wee know, then wee come neere to him, and in such drawing neere, wee must sanctifie him in our hearts, that is, we must conceive him to be, as he is, most holy. Now if the *Lord* be most holy, if he that is uncleane, and impure, and unholy, shall come neere him, hee sanctifies not the *Lord God*, (that is) hee comes neere him as to a most holy *God*, but he looks upon him, as if he were a common person. And therefore whensoever they came to offer a sacrifice, in the old Law, they were first purified; if any were uncleane, and should offer a sacrifice, it was to be cut off from his people. Therefore to sanctifie the *Lord* in our hearts, is to come with holy hearts, as in the 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. It is the charge that the Apostle gives there, *Lift up pure hands without wrath or doubting:*

lift

1 *Tim.* 2. 8.

lift up your hearts, and innocent hands, without wrath, or doubting.

But you will say, what is this holinesse?

Beloved, it is nothing but *a sequestering, or separating anything from a common use, and appropriating it to God alone*; that is holinesse. You know, whatsoever was holy to the Lord, in the Temple, or otherwise, whether it were holy vessels, or holy men, as the Priests, it was separated from all other uses, and made peculiar to him, and to his service. Now the heart of a man is holy then, when it is withdrawne from all things else, and peculiar to the Lord alone. As a chaste wife is to her husband, whose affections are bestowed upon him, & no other person else; so when the heart is to the Lord alone, when all the affections are intent upon him, and bestowed upon him, and upon none else, this is to have the heart wholly to him. So that now he that will have an eye upon credit, upon vaine-glory, upon wealth, upon his lusts, upon any thing besides the Lord, whereto the heart is wedded, so that he bestowes any part of that conjugall affection upon it, which should be wholly the Lord's, this man is an unholy man, his heart is not holy: for it is not sequestred from other things, and consecrated to him alone: for that only is to be holy.

And as the heart must be holy, so must the prayer be holy. When a man prayes to the Lord with respect unto him, and hath an eye upon him, and nothing else comes in to take away part of this prayer; if by-respect, and worldly, and carnall

Quest.

Ans.

Holines what

I

The heart must be holy.

Simile.

An unholy man who,

2

The prayer must be holy.

carnall thoughts come in, and set you on worke to pray, now these have a portion & interest in your prayers; they make your prayers profane and common, they are not peculiar to the *Lord*, they are unholy. So that is the holines then in seeking the *Lord*, when we are knit, and wedded to him, when one takes this resolution to himselfe, I am the *Lords* servant, and him will I serve, I am not the servant of man, nor of any creature, I am married to the *Lord*, and his will I bee alone, I will withdraw my heart from all things else. So likewise when a man prayes, so that his soule is intent upon the *Lord*, and upon nothing besides, when the whole streame of his affections are carried to him, this is to seeke to him in holinesse, this is to sanctifie the *Lord* in our hearts.

And lastly, if there be any conscience of sinne, (that phrase is used in *Heb. 10.*) that is, if there be any evill conscience, if a man bee conscious to himselfe of any sinne that is unrepented of, such a man cannot pray, that makes him unholy: if there be any sinfull lust yet living in him, that is unmortified in him, which is not washed away, such a man is unholy: yea, my Beloved, the Saints themselves, when they sinne against *God*, as you heard before, they are suspended from the Covenant, though they be within the Covenant, yet they are suspended from receiving the benefit of it, which otherwise they might have: that sinne be washed away they are not holy. A priest, or one that was holy, if he touched any uncleane thing, hee remained unholy

Heb. 10. 2.

3

Particular sins
must be repen-
ted of.

holy, till he was washed, though otherwise hee were holy habitually, wholly dedicated to Gods service; so it may be with those, that are within the Covenant, though thou be a holy man, yet, if thou touch pitch, that is, if thy heart be polluted with any sinne, of one kinde or other, as long as that remaines, thou art unholy. If thou come now, and seeke to the *Lord*, you know what the judgement was in the old law, such an one was to bee cut off from his people. And therefore, you shall finde, this was the constant practise of the Saints, when they sought the *Lord*, for any speciall mercy, they began with taking paines with their owne hearts, with humbling themselves for their owne sinnes, and the sinnes of the people: as we know, *Daniel*, and *Ezra*, and *David* did in their prayers; but I will not stand to inlarge my selfe therein, for it is well enough knowne to such as are conversant in the Scriptures: only let me exhort every man, when hee commeth with any request and petition to the *Lord*, let him first examine his heart and life diligently, looke backe to all his former wayes, consider and goe through all the particulars; see if there bee any thing amisse, if there be any tincture of uncleannesse yet lying upon him, which is not yet washed away, if there be any pollution, any defilement of flesh, or spirit; and let him know, that it is but labour lost, it is a provoking of the *Lord*, to come with unpreparednesse to draw neere to him, except he be cleansed.

But you will say, How shall we be cleansed?

K

I

The practise
of holy men in
their prayers.

Quest.

Answ.

2 Meanes of
cleansing a
mans selfe.

I

I answer, you are cleansed by renewing your repentance, and sprinkling the blood of Christ: when a man humbles himselfe for his sinne, and entreth into a covenant with God; not to returne unto it, when he makes his heart perfect, and sincere with the Lord in that particular.

2

1 Cor. 6. 9.

Consciousnesse
of sin a great
hinderance in
our prayers.

Simile.

And secondly, when he shall withall beleieve, that it is forgiven through Christ, when hee is sprinkled with his blood to wash it away: though thy sinne be great, yet this will make thee pure, now thou art washed; as it is in the 1 Corin. 6. 9. *Now you are washed, now you are sanctified, now you are justified*: therefore let not a man be discouraged in this case: for, I confesse, there is nothing that gives such a checke to our prayers, that gives so many stabbes to them, (as it were) that hinders us in that duty, as the consciousness of sinne, when a man remembers such and such a sinne hee hath committed, which doth much discourage him, if by the blood of Iesus Christ they bee not washed away. Though a mans face be very foule, yet you know, a basin of cleere water will wash it cleane, and all the filth is gone; now the blood of Christ is more effectuall to rinse thy conscience, and to purge it from dead workes, to take away, both the guilt, and likewise the filth and staine of sin, than water is to cleanse thy face, and therefore, if thou hast any sinne, labour to be washed from it, that so thou maist come to the Lord, having thy heart sprinkled from an evill conscience, & thy body washed in pure water, as it is Heb. 10. 22. *Let us draw neere*, saith the A-

Heb. 10. 22.

postle

postle, in assurance of faith; (but how?) having our hearts sprinkled from an evill conscience: as it hee should say, Otherwise your drawing neere will be to no purpose, you shall but provoke the Lord in drawing neere, except you be thus sprinkled, and thus washed, and thus purified.

I, but you will say to mee, if this be required, who shall bee heard in his prayers? For who can say his heart is pure, and his hands are innocent? and if this be required, that wee must lift up holy and pure hearts, or elsie we shall not be accepted; what comfort shall wee have in calling upon the Lord, at any time?

To this I answer, that to have a pure heart is not to be free from sin, and from daily failings, (for soindeede none should have a pure heart) but purenesse of heart, holinessse of heart is, to have our hearts sprinkled from an evill conscience, and to have our bodies washed with pure water; (that is,) to be purified before the Lord is nothing elsie, but to have such an habituall disposition, which makes a man ready to wash himselfe still, though hee bee still spotted with sinne. So that this is the disposition of a holy man; if a man that drawes neere to the LORD with a pure heart, though hee be still spotted, and polluted, and defiled, yet hee hath an habituall disposition, hee hath a principle within, hee hath a new nature within, that is still working out that impurity, and washing it away; though still he be opposed, and assaulted, and tempted, and sometimes foiled, yet still he resists it, and fights against it;

Objec.

Ans.

What it is to have a pure heart.

A holy heart
never makes
peace with sin.

as the *Israelites* had a charge never to make peace with *Amalek* : such a disposition is in a holy man, hee never makes peace with any sinne ; though hee be led captive sometimes by it, yet he yeelds not to that captivity. This is to have a pure heart, though his heart be defiled sometimes as a vessel will bee foule, yet hee washeth, and rinseth his heart, he never suffers it to continue muddy ; and uncleane, and in a filthy disposition, but hee hath a fountaine, a spring of grace within, that will worke out all impurity, as a spring workes out mudde ; hee that thus purifies himselfe still, though the fountaine be muddy, though there be many injections, many temptations, many lusts and sinnes, yet, if hee bee purified himselfe, that hee will suffer no sinne to mingle with his heart (as it were) to rest there, and to abide, and dwell there, to lye and continue there, such a man hath a pure heart. We say, that is pure, that is full of it selfe, and will have no *heterogenea*, no other thing mingled with it, such a thing is pure, as pure oyle is nothing else but oyle. Now hee that hath a pure heart, is not he that hath simply nothing else, that hath no sinne mingled, that hath no drosse mingled with his wine, but hee that suffers it not to rest there, for as oyle and water, when you jumble them together, (as you know) when they are shaken together, they mingle, yet the oyle workes out, and purifies it selfe, it will not suffer it selfe to abide with the water : so a man that is regenerate, a man that is *borne of God*, hath a seed remaining in him, though he doe sin,

Purity what.

Simile.

lip, yet, saith the Apostle, *he cannot sinne*, that is, he doth not agree, he doth not mingle with that sin, it hath no rest in his heart, but he workes it out; in a passion when hee is shaken (as it were) when he is transported, when he is not himselfe, there may bee a mixture, and the fountaine, and the spring may be made muddy, yet let him come to himselfe, still hee works it out: and this it is to have a pure heart. So that a man a man thus affected may come with boldnesse to the throne of grace, and not be discouraged; what though thy finnes be many, and very great, and often repeated? yet if thou finde in thy selfe such a disposition of purenesse and holinesse, still to cleanse thy selfe, though thou bee still polluted and defiled, I can assure thee, thy heart is pure, thou maist go with confidence to the throne of grace.

But now you will say this to me, (for that may be objected) why? but may not any carnall man say as much, he sins against God, and comes and askes mercy, hee comes and cries for forgiveness and saith he will sinne no more, and yet he sinnes againe the next day, & *addes drunkennesse to thirst*; that is, his sinne and his repentance they runne in a circle, as drunkennesse and thirst? how shall we then distinguish betweene these two? that purifying disposition in the Saints, and those vanishing purposes that carnall men may have, who notwithstanding never had experience of the worke of grace, of that puritie of heart that wee speake of?

To this I answer briefly, you shall know the

Object.

Answer.

Difference between the godly and others in falling into sinne.

Sinne in a carnal man groweth stronger, in a godly man weaker.

Acts lessen the habits.

Quest.

Answ.

How sin in a godly man is weakened by his falls.

difference by this, a godly man, when hee falls into sinne, and is defiled with it, hee washeth himselfe from day to day; you shall find alwayes this, that he gets ground of the sinne, of the lust which manifests it selfe in any actuall transgression, still it loseth by it, it gathers not strength, but loseth strength: in a carnall man it is quite contrary, his sinne still increaseth, and intends the habit, and the lust growes stronger and stronger, is gets ground of him, and those good things that hee hath, they are more and more worne out, and so they grow worse and worse from day to day: and that is the property of an evill man, of unregeneracy wheresoever, it is apt to grow worse and worse, and the more falls they have, the more sinne gets ground, and the more they lose; but it is not so with an holy man, the more he falls, the more strength he gathers, he is the more holy by it, the more wary, and watchfull over his wayes, hee is the more emptied of himselfe, and drawes neerer to the LORD, and is the more inflamed with love of him, yea he is strengthened in faith, and repentance, and in every grace; so that here the rule now holds not true, that *Acts increase habits*; but the contrary, *Acts lessen the habits*, which is a paradox in Philosophy, but here it is so.

If you aske how this can be?

If answer, in its owne nature every act intends the habit, as well in a godly man, as another man, but it comes to passe by accident, as wee say, because the grace in him is stirred up, by those

those toiles, and slips, those fals and infirmities, to which he is subject; I say, grace is stirred up in him more and more, and he receives more vigour and strength thereby. As wee say of true valour, it is increased more by opposition; so it comes to passe, that the more the childe of *God* falls into sinne, the more grace is intended, *Satan* gets lesse ground, as *Hezekiah*, when hee fell into pride the pride of his heart was lessened more by it after the act, than it was at that time when he shewed his treasure to the Ambassadour of the King of *Babel*, he knew not before the pride of his heart; that sinne, that fall did manifest his corruption, which he did not see before: for when the heart is sincere, when it is pure, when there is a right principle within, grace is set more on worke to resist sinne. So *David*, when hee had numbred the people, that made him more humble, and therefore the *Lord* shewed him more mercie afterwards, than ever he did before; hee shewed him where the Temple should bee built, and used him in that worke, whereas hee never shewed him such mercy, and kindnesse before: (I cannot stand to expresse particulars) so it is with all *Gods* children; their hearts are never better, nor in a more holy temper, in a more gracious disposition feareful to offend, than after their fals. And therefore consider this, that thou be not deceived; but maist distinguish betweene this falling into sinne, and washing your selves, and that relapse to which evill men are subject; keepe that for a rule, that wheresoever there is true

Valour increased by opposition.

The heart of the Godly best after,

*Note.**Simile.*

Vertue gets
strength by
wounds.

Simile.

grace, still it stirres it selfe more and more, as it findes more resistance; even as the winde and the water, and the fire doth; you know, the water when it findes a stop, it growes more violent, and so also the winde; of the same nature is grace, where it findes a stop, or resistance, it growes more strong, and intent. The Heathen had a little glimpse of this truth, when they said of vertue, that it growes more fresh and vigorous by being wounded; it is true of grace and holinesse, the truest vertue, the more it is opposed the more it growes: even as you see in opposition in the disputes of Schollers, and all kinde of contentions in law, or any thing else, the stronger the objection is, where there is ability in the party, it produceth new motions, and new answers, and puts them more to it; so these assaults and temptations, when there is truth of heart within, it drawes out more holinesse to God, and more strength, it multiplies the graces of God within: so that the graces receive increase, and the more they are exercised, and intended, sinnefull lusts decrease, the minde is more emptied forth, the chaffe that is in us, and the drosse is more winnowed out, & the heart is more clenfed from it. So much shall serve for this, that whosoever will come to the Lord in prayer, must sanctifie him in his heart, that is, he must come with a holy, & with a pure heart. Wherewith all we have shewed what this holinesse, and purenesse is, wherein it consists, and likewise how the objection is answered, that might deceive us.

I must adde another, you shall find in *Phil. 4. 6.* whensoever you come to make your requests to the *Lord*, this is another condition that hee requires, to bee *thankfull* for the mercies you have received already: *In all things*, saith hee, *let your requests be made knowne to the Lord, with thanksgiving*: as if hee should say, Take heed of this, that whensoever you come to put up any petition to the *Lord*, you forget not the duty of thankfulness, but still when you come to aske any thing that you want, remember that you give thanks for that you have. Beloved, this condition must not bee omitted; you see the *Lord* himselfe puts it in very carefully, *Let your requests bee made knowne with Prayer, and supplication, and with thanksgiving*. There is much reason why our petitions, and requests should bee accompanied with thanksgiving to the *Lord*: for is it not reason when you come to aske somewhat for your selves, that you should doe that also that is acceptable to *G O D*? Will a man serve himselfe altogether to come meerely to aske the thing hee wants? This a man may doe out of love to himselfe, out of respect to himselfe, but you must remember to doe something that is pleasing and acceptable to the *Lord*. And therefore you shall finde in the old Law, whensoever they had any speciall request to the *Lord*, they were commanded still to come with *peace Offerings*, that is, Offerings, wherin they expressed thankfulness, you shall find this custome set down in *Levit.* & other places, that such a man as came to request any thing,

6. Condition
required in
prayer, is
Thankfulness.
Phil. 4. 6;

Note.

All mercies
reduced to
peace.

If we looke
only on our
wants, we can-
not be thank-
full.

Simile.

thing at the *Lords* hands, might not come *empty-handed*: and what should hee bring with him? a peace offering: what was that? thankfulnessse for that peace he had enjoyed, that was a peace offering. For *peace* is a generall word, comprehending all kinde of mercies, for what is our health, but the peace of our humours within? what is our chearefulnessse, and joy, but the peace of conscience within? all the comfort wee have in our name and state, it is peace in the particular, &c. So I say, whensoever thou comest with a petition, forget not to come with a peace offering, that is, forget not to come with thanksgiving to the *Lord*, for that which thou hast received, doe somewhat that is acceptable to him, as well as seeke for that which is usefull for thy selfe. Beloved, there is much reason for it; because, if a man be poring on his wants still, if it be in his mind when he comes to call upon *God*, it will indispose him for spirituall performance; it will beget murmuring, and sowernessse, & discontent, it will imbitter his spirit; But when as a man remembers many mercies that he hath received, when he makes a catalogue of them, and enumerates them, it sweetens his spirit, it makes him more gracious, it acts those graces that are in him, it drawes him nearer to the *Lord*, it quickens him, it makes him more contented with his condition that he is in: whereas, on the other side, forgetfulnessse of mercies, when a man is onely intent upon his petition to have the thing done, hee breakes many times into that sullennessse of disposition,

disposition, that wee finde in children, that when they cannot have all that they would, they throw away that which they have; it like manner it is our fault many times, when we come and seeke to the Lord for any thing that we have need, wee are so intent upon it, that we forget all the mercies we have received, as if they were nothing: the Lord would not have it so, but will have us remember what wee receive, that wee may bee content to want, that our hearts may bee brought to patience, and contentment, under the crosse, and to want what it shall please him for a time to deny us: as *Iob* reasoneth, saith he, *I have receiued good from the Lords hands, (it is his answer to his wife) and shall I not receive ill?* So, if a good man bee thankfull for mercies, it will make him ready to doe so, it will make him content with that present want: for hee lookes to that which hee hath had in hand. When a man saith thus with himselfe, thus, and thus much good I have received at the Lords hands; what though I want such a thing? What though I bee prest with such an affliction, and calamity? I will be content to beare it: I say, the Lord lookes for this; expostulating with him and murmuring against him, is not acceptable to him, but a meeke manner of asking things at his hands, when a man so askes, that withall hee is content to bee denied, if his good pleasure be so this he accepts. Now, thankfulnessse for mercie, makes us ready to be so affected, to be willing to be denied, to be content to resigne our selves to the Lord; and therefore hee will have
 thanke-

The sight of
 some good re-
 ceived will
 make us con-
 tent to want,

thankfulnesse to goe with it, whensoever wee come to aske any things at his hands. Looke to it then, that whensoever you come to seeke the *Lord*, you be thankfull for the mercies you have had, remember them, for it is a great meanes to prevaile in our requests. Thankfulness is (as it were) the incense that perfumes your petitions, that makes them acceptable, and prevalent with the *Lord*, so much the sooner: Prayer goes up without incense, when we offer up our petitions without thankfulnesse, because that is a sacrifice. as you know it is called the *calves of our lippes*, and ever when you joyne thankfulnesse with your petitions, it is like a sacrifice mingled with it, that helpes to prevaile with you.

7. Condition
required in
prayer, is to
come in the
name of the
Lord Iesus
Christ.

Iam. 4.

The next condition is, and it must not be forgotten of all the rest, that wee come to the *Lord*, in the name of *Iesus Christ*. This is a thing commonly knowne, you will say, who knowes not that except wee come in the name of *Christ*, no petition can bee acceptable? Beloved, I say to you in that case, as the Apostle *Iames* speakes, *Iames 4.* where hee gives this rule, that we should say, *If the Lord will, we will doe such and such a thing to morrow, &c.* And when the answer would bee ready, Who knowes not this? saith he, *if you know the will of the LORD, and doe it not, your judgement shall bee greater;* so I say, if any doe not practise this, (and it is a thing wee are exceeding ready to forget, or wee are ready to doe it in a formall, and in a customary manner, but to doe it in good earnest, as wee ought to doe it, therein

therein commonly wee come short) you know how great a sinne it was, in the old law, to offer without a Priest; in the 17 of *Leuiticum* it is said, if any man brought his Sacrifice, though it were the best sacrifice and the choicest, yet, saith the text, *If hee did not bring it to the Priest, and to the Altar, but slay his sacrifice else-where, without a Priest, such a man was guilty of blood, and was to be cut off from his people: that is, hee was to bee cut off by the Priest, by excommunication, and after by the civill Magistrate.* You know, it was *Azaziah*s fault to offer incense, when it was proper to the Priest only to doe it. The same sinne wee commit when wee come to the Lord, and thinke, because wee have repented, and prayed fervently a little while, and our hearts and spirits are in a good disposition, and because wee know no sinne of which wee are conscious, therefore wee conclude that wee shall bee heard. It is true, the Lord requires these qualifications in the party, when hee prays; but take heed of thinking to bee heard for this, this is to offer without a Priest. You must come thus to the Lord, and say thus unto him, LORD, I confesse (notwithstanding all this) I am unworthy, I have nothing in mee, why thou shouldest regard mee; it cannot bee, that either I, or my prayer should be acceptable, but I beseech thee, take them at the hands of *CHRIST* our High Priest; hee that is entered into the vail, he that takes the prayers of the Saints, and mingles them with sweet odours; when a man can really doe

Levit. 17.

How we ought
to come to
God.

Levit. 3. 11.

Our prayers
are not heard
for any excel-
lency in them,
but for Christ.

doe this, with dependance upon Christ, and come boldly in his name, that is to offer a sacrifice to him. This wee must carefully remember and therefore wee see an excellent expression of it in *Levit. 5.* where this is made cleafe to you, that it is not any excellency in the person, nor any fervency in the prayer, nor any purenesse, or holinesse that is found in him, nothing that comes from man, that causeth his prayer to bee acceptable, but it is the Priest: See the place from *vers. 8.* to the *11.* You shall finde there the law was, that he that came to sacrifice, *must bring a sheepe, or a shee goate;* but if he were not so rich as to doe so, he was able enough to bring *two turtle Doves;* yet if he were not able to doe that, then saith the text, *He shall bring the tenth part of an Epha of fine floure,* (a very small thing) and then it is said, *let him give it as a trespass, and hee shall make an atonement for him, and his sinne shall be forgiven.* Whence I obserue this, that it is not the goodnesse of the sacrifice, the price, nor the choinesse nor the excellency of that, though it were a thousand Rammes, and so many sheepe, and bullocks, (as you reade of many great sacrifices that were offered by the Kings) yet the tenth part of an Epha of fine floure, which was exceeding little, this prevailed fully as much: whence it is evident, that it is not in the excellencie of the sacrifice, but the poorest, and the smallest, and the meanest sacrifice will prevaile with God, as well as the richest, and the greatest. What is the reason? The Text saith, It is the Priest that must offer it,

it, hee makes it acceptable. So in this case, let the sacrifice bee never so meane, yet if it bee Christ; that offers the sacrifice, if it be commended to the Priest, and hee offers it, the Lord will accept it. You shall find that rule, *Levit. 5. 11. He that brings a sacrifice,* (this caution was given) *he must put no incense to it, neither oyle.* But should the sacrifice be offered without incense? No, you shall find in *Levit. 16.* that alwayes, *the Priest when he entred into the Holy of Holiest, he burnt incense, that the cloud of that incense might cover the Mercy-seate:* the meaning is this, that when any man comes to offer a prayer to the Lord, hee can put no incense to it, the Priest onely hee must put in incense, that is, **I E S U S C H R I S T** onely must offer the sacrifice, wherein the Lord smells a savour of rest: for the Lord expresseth himselfe in this manner, as if he were disquieted for sinne, and can take no rest; now, when *Iesus Christ* offers a sacrifice, he smells a savour of rest; because it comes from him, in whom hee is well pleased: so I say, wee must bee carefull, that we remember we come in the name of Christ.

But, you will say, every man doth so, and how shall we know it?

You shall know it by this, if you have boldnesse and confidence, that is an argument that you looke not upon your selves, but upon Christ. When a man is so exceeding timorous, and doubting, and fearefull, that hee dares not come to the throne of grace; or, if hee doe, yet hee makes a great question, whether he shall be heard

or

Levit. 5. 11.

Levit. 16. 11.
Christ must
put incense to
our prayers.

Object.

Ans.

How to know
when we come
in our owne
names in
prayer.

What required in the heart that comes to God in Christs name.

Heb. 9.

Objct.

Ans.
Two things
required in
our sacrifice.

or no, this is too much looking to himselfe, here, the high Priest is forgotten. If thou come in his name, there is enough to carry thee out, it will breed boldnesse in thee, it will breed confidence: if thou come in the name of Christ, and offer up thy prayers through him, it will cause thee, in every petition thou puttest up, to thinke thy selfe so much beholding to Christ, that thou wilt be ready to say in thy heart, whensoever any petition is granted thee, I may thanke Iesus Christ for this. When a man, I say, shall be so much put upon his score, it wil make him so much indebted to the Lord Iesus for his sinne that is remitted, & his Petition that he hath granted, as that his heart shall bee more enlarged to thankfulness, when hee is able to consider the benefit of redemption, and is ready to say with himselfe, If Iesus Christ had not dyed, if I had not had such an high Priest, that hath entred into the very heavens, as the Apostle saith, *Heb. 9. To make intercession for mee*, I had lost this benefit, I had never come to have put up a prayer to the Lord, or if I had, it should not have beene heard.

But you will say to mee, If wee be heard for Christ; then though a man be sinfull, and though he have none of the precedent conditions, though he have not that holinesse that is required, if the Priest make him acceptable, why may hee not hope as well as the most holy man?

I answer, briefly, though the Priest give all acceptance to the sacrifice, and our prayers are accepted through him, yet that is not all, there are

are two things besides required, first that the person that brings the sacrifice, be cleane; no impure person was to bring a sacrifice: secondly, that the sacrifice be without blemish; he that hath a male, and brings a female, is cursed: So then this is required, that the person be righteous, and that the prayer be fervent, such as is indited by the helpe of Gods Spirit, that it may be a sacrifice fit for the Lord. But now, what we have from CHRIST is this, that though the person, and the prayer bee thus qualified, and have those forenoted conditions in it, yet it is not acceptable without the Priest. And therefore this should encourage you, when you consider the glorious GOD, his holynesse, that great distance betweene him and you; and your selves, on the other side, how vile and sinfull you are, and unfit to come and put up your requests to him, now, when you thinke of a Mediator, of an high Priest, who is entred into heaven, who is gone thither, and sits at the right hand of Majesty, making intercession for you, when you consider there is one high Priest, who is able to prevaile, not like the Priests in the Law, but one that is over the house of God, one that is his very Son, who is not entred in through the blood of Bulls and Goates, but with his owne blood; when out of this you shall receive confidence, and come neere him with boldnesse, this is to make use of *Christ*, and to offer sacrifice in him. There is no more remaining now, but that when you have considered all the conditions mentioned, & fitted your prayers according to them, that you

L

be

The person
must be holy,
and the pray-
er fervent.

How to make
use of Christ
as our Priest,

Waiting in
prayer requi-
red.

Simile.

Instances of
being over-
hasty after
prayer.

be confident, and expect much, that when you have prayed, you may say thus; *Lord, I expect now the granting of them, thou canst not now deny them, Lord, I will wait now.* And this is our fault, when we have prayed, and the thing comes not presently, wee are ready to give over, we are not willing to waite. Beloved, that is one thing specially to bee remembred, wee must so farre magnifie our prayers, wee must set a price upon them so farre, and so esteeme them, and thinke them of that worth, that they will bring the thing to passe. If a man take a drugge, or a medicine, or an herbe, and use it to a wound, or a disease, once or twice, or thrice, and if hee see it doth no good, he will lay it aside, and take another medicine: for, saith he, I have tryed it, and it will doe me no good; so a man doth with his prayers, hee saith, I have sought to the *Lord*, I have prayed for this thing twice, or thrice, and it is not granted me, and therefore hee is ready to lay it aside, as if it were not effectuell, and to take another meanes: this neglect of prayer is not to know the force of the medicine. You must know therefore of what efficacie prayer is, and trust it, and not give over, (for it is effectuell to bring the thing to passe) and make not haste, but stay, and waite. It was *Sarahs* fault, when *Abraham* and shee sought to the *Lord* for a sonne, she made too much haste to give *Hagar* to *Abraham*, when as they should have stayed till the *Lord* had done it his owne way. So *Rebekkah*, there was a promise, and no doubt *Jacob* and shee prayed for the fulfilling of that

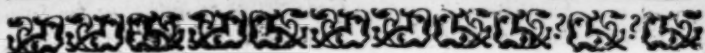
that promise; but she made too much haste, she tooke a wrong way to get the blessing by lying; this was not waiting, but a stepping out to another meanes; because they thought prayer and dependance upon God would not doe it. So *Saul* would not waite upon God, but he would offer sacrifice, this was to make haste. And so it is, when a man is discouraged; *David*, when the thing was not presently granted, he was ready to give over, and falls to a desperate complaint, saying, *One day I shall fall by the hands of Saul.*

1 Sam. 29. 1.

Take heede of this, and when wee offer up our prayers thus, learne to know what they are, learne to trust them, & to depend, and waite upon God; say certainly, I shall not bee denied, the thing shall surely be granted.



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